

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick**

**Permanent WRAP URL:**

<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/137015>

**Copyright and reuse:**

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it.

Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: [wrap@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:wrap@warwick.ac.uk)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank my supervisor  
Professor John Rex for the guidance during the research  
and writing of this thesis.

Also, I am grateful to Drs. Stanley  
Trapido and Frederick Johnstone for useful discussions of  
some of the points raised in the thesis.

-----

CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
ABSTRACT	4
CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM	6
CHAPTER TWO: SLAVERY IN THE CAPE	24
CHAPTER THREE: CONFLICT AND CONQUEST - THE EASTERN FRONTIER (SECTION A)	65
CHAPTER FOUR: CONFLICT AND CONQUEST - THE EASTERN FRONTIER (SECTION B)	109
CHAPTER FIVE: CONQUEST AND LABOUR EXPLOITATION IN THE BOER REPUBLICS AND NATAL	151
CHAPTER SIX: INDUSTRIALIZATION AND CLASS FORMATION IN A SETTLER SOCIETY	180
CHAPTER SEVEN: TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DYNAMICS OF SETTLER DOMINATION	229
BIBLIOGRAPHY	273

-----

ABSTRACT

South Africa has developed into one of the most extreme cases of racial domination known in modern times. Since the seizure of state power by the National Party in 1948 white supremacy has been consolidated to a degree that could never have been predicted given the international climate in which decolonization and racial liberalism are the order of the day (at least formally).

This thesis attempts a historical - sociological analysis of the development of inter-group relations in that society.

Chapter one is a brief statement of the problem.

From the early days of the Dutch East India Company's Settlement at the Cape in the second half of the seventeenth century the problem of labour-shortage resulted in the importation of slaves mainly from the far east. So with the military subjugation of the Khoi Khoi a multi-racial society developed in the Cape depending on slave-labour.

By the time of the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and the institution in the 1830s a racially stratified society had emerged.

The conquest of the Bantu speaking African groups and the importation of Indian indentured labour led to the formation of an ethnic estate order dominated by the white minority which was itself not culturally homogeneous.

Industrialization, with mining providing the initial growth point took place within the framework of a racially stratified colonial order thus resulting in a



20

peculiar form of colonial capitalism which can be characterized as one that displays growth without an industrial revolution in social relations.

Also the seizure of state power by the Afrikaners (a group who had been militarily subjugated, and by and large outside the bourgeoisie in the early stages of industrialization) resulted in the use of political power to reinforce white supremacy. The system continues to thrive on coercion and racial regimentation and promises of final ethnic fragmentation or planned underdevelopment.

CHAPTER ONETHE PROBLEM

The burden of this thesis is a historical-sociological analysis of the development of South African society from the middle of the seventeenth century to the present. The choice of subject arose from two sets of circumstances: (a) A personal interest in change in that society; (b) The paucity of sociological research on the subject.

It will be apparent from circumstance (a) that the particular approach adopted emphasizes the coercive (and hence potentially explosive) aspects in the development of inter-group relations. In other words by exploring the contradictions the social structure is analyzed from the point of view of its transcendence or negation.

The above assertions have a bearing on the unresolved problems of academic sociology centering around the problem of objectivity and social knowledge. In terms of the now prevalent distinction between what has been called the 'sociology of decision' and its counterpart, namely, the 'sociology of opposition',<sup>1</sup> the thrust of the research undertaken here is in the spirit of the latter category.

This again raises the problem of ideology in sociological analysis. The position taken here is that a correct understanding of the social structure is a necessary prerequisite for grappling with the problem of social change. Thus sociological research, to the extent that it is not

---

<sup>1</sup> Touraine, A. Post-Industrial Society.

obfuscatory, should by definition, aid rather than hinder change. On the other hand ideologically based research cannot provide even a partial understanding of the society since it is based on a distortion, namely a 'justificatory' or 'illusory' perspective.

For does a commitment to opposition or change necessarily yield meaningful results. Indeed most of the sociological theorizing on South African society is conceived in the spirit of opposition to what is regarded as an unjust and hence outdated system of racial domination. However, the obfuscatory element in it is unmistakable, as will be shown later.

This can be seen as a consequence of the peculiarity of the South African mode of racial domination on the one hand, and the parochial nature of sociology as a discipline as it has developed hitherto, on the other. The conceptual tools of the subject remain firmly anchored in the culture and presuppositions of western bourgeois society. Thus the crisis of the latter was bound to be reflected in the field of social knowledge.

South African society has, by and large, been left out, not because of lack of interest in it, but as a result of a historical peculiarity in the theorizing about societies. For a long time whatever fell outside Europe and North America was regarded as the domain of social anthropology to which sociology referred only for purposes of comparison in constructing evolutionary schemes. Even the researches of such an erudite comparative sociologist as Max Weber are conceived from the point of view of showing the peculiarity of western society.

As the aftermath of the movement for colonial independence a new euphoria has now developed. The central themes are those of underdevelopment and development mostly defined in statistical-indice terms. Most of this literature excludes South Africa even though a different definition of underdevelopment would support the view that in terms of human relations what we have there is one of the most extreme cases of underdevelopment since the abolition of slavery and the defeat of fascism in Europe.

However, South Africa has a fairly highly industrialized economy and has most of the trappings of a so-called developed society - the so-called white sector serviced by semi-chattel black labour - a rightless proletariat.

In approaching the problem from the point of view of the dynamics of intergroup relations two bodies of conceptual apparatuses suggested themselves, namely, stratification theory; and the amalgam of theories that go under the label of pluralism.

As regards both sets of theories the main difficulty that confronts the researcher is the amount of confusion that surrounds them. As regards stratification one can safely say that since Max Weber's exploratory essay on Class Status and Party hardly anything meaningful has been written on the subject. Pluralism never got off the ground. This general bankruptcy manifests itself in the inability of western sociology to cope with the problem of race.

In the case of stratification theories these difficulties arise from two interrelated factors, namely: (a) the historical and cultural specificity of most of its concepts; (b) the process of what one may call the emasculation which some of them have undergone.

An examination of a concept like class illustrates the validity of the above propositions. Certainly the concept of class, say in the Marxian sense (relationship to the means of production), presupposes a certain relationship between political and economic power which has implications for the structuring of intergroup or class relations. Now the colonial division between settler and native, colonizer and colonized, cannot be accommodated into the usual narrow conceptual scheme. In this respect Frantz Fanon<sup>2</sup> has observed that "within a nation it is usual and commonplace to identify two antagonistic forces: the working class and bourgeois capitalism." He goes on to argue that "in a colonial country this distinction proves totally inadequate".

It is not so much that there are many other classes or that the opposing classes are not culturally homogeneous but rather that the nature of power arrangements is essentially different and so is the relationship between economic and political power. A redefinition of class along much broader Weberian lines of market position and opportunities, though it may indicate the general distribution of privileges on racial lines would fail as a guide to the dynamics of the society in so far as they reflect the nature of intergroup conflict. The position of the so-called African bourgeoisie (Kuper)<sup>3</sup> is a case in point. While it is the case that some of them may be said to be in the same 'market situation' as the white petty bourgeoisie and working class yet a more systematic examination of their situation in general, namely, what they can do with whatever economic means they have would indicate the flaw in lumping them together with the whites'.

---

<sup>2</sup>Fanon, Frantz Toward the African Revolution, pp. 90-91

<sup>3</sup>Kuper, L. An African Bourgeoisie, Race Class and Politics in South Africa.

In fact it is in this respect that the separation which Weber made between economic power and political power is most useful. An examination of both aspects of power in our situation illustrates how anomalous it is to talk about an African bourgeoisie. In fact the groups that are usually included in this category resemble what one might call an 'oppressed literati' whose position as a status group is in fact problematic as we shall indicate later.

Nor does the simplistic pluralist pseudo-solution that sees stratification as taking place within the so-called segments offer any meaningful alternative approach as will be indicated later.

As regards what we have called 'emasculatation' Karl Mannheim<sup>4</sup> touched on this problem indirectly when he wrote:

It has become clear that the principal propositions of the social sciences are neither mechanistically external nor formal, nor do they represent purely quantitative correlations but rather situational diagnoses in which we use, by and large, the same concrete concepts and thought-models which were created for activistic purposes in real life. It is clear, furthermore, that every social science diagnosis is closely connected with the evaluations and unconscious orientations of the observer and that the critical self-clarification of the social sciences is intimately bound up with the critical self-clarification of our orientation in the everyday world. An observer who is not fundamentally interested in the social roots of the changing ethics of the period in which he himself lives, who does not think through the problems of social life in terms of the tensions between social strata, and who has not also discovered the fruitful aspect of resentment in his own experience, will never be in a position to see that phase of Christian ethics described above, to say nothing of being able to under-

This is true even of a seemingly broad enough concept like status defined in the Leberian sense of distribution of social honour. For instance the researcher has the experience of growing up in a small village in the Cape with both a Cape Coloured family and a 'traditional' African family as neighbours. His family being of the 'school' type and also fanatic methodists looked down upon both neighbours. The apparent objection to the Cape Coloured family was that they were 'cultureless' and 'unstable' which simply meant that they were not African, while the objection to the 'traditional' African family was on the grounds that they were 'heathen' and 'uncivilized' which meant that they were authentic Africans. The 'traditional' family looked down upon the other two because the Christians (especially Fingos) had sold out to the whites while the Coloureds were not pure. For their part the coloured family expressed their racial superiority by means of their favourite expression 'singabelungu abamnyama' (we are black white men).

Two points emerge from the above apparently trivial mixture of fact and stereotype, namely, that it would be impossible to talk in terms of a status system in the normal form of widely accepted criteria; and, secondly, that inter-group relations on a micro-level within that small village cannot be understood outside the context of the wider historical evolution of the dynamics of the colonial situation. Even though the only representative of the ruling white minority there would be the sole figure of the local trader and the transient agents of institutionalized instruments of domination like the white school inspector or the cattle dipping supervisor, relations between the three categories mentioned cannot be understood without reference to the wider system of racial

stand it. It is precisely in the degree in which he participates evaluatively (sympathetically or antagonistically) in the struggle for the ascendancy of the lower strata, in the degree that he evaluates resentment positively or negatively, that he becomes aware of the dynamic significance of social tension and resentment. "Lower class", "social ascendancy", "resentment" instead of being formal concepts are meaningfully oriented concepts. If they were to be formalized, and the evaluations they contain distilled out of them, the thought-model characteristic of the situation in which it is precisely resentment which produced the good and novel fruitful norm would be totally inconceivable.

Now if one examines the vocabulary of contemporary stratification theories one cannot fail to notice the stress on 'status', 'occupational categories', 'social mobility', 'social differentiation', 'relative deprivation', 'privatization', and the almost total exclusion of concepts like exploitation, domination, coercion, dehumanization, immiseration etc. The only conclusion one can come to is that stratification theory which ideally should unmask relations of domination and exploitation in society long ago succumbed to the view that what has evolved in western Europe and north America is now a 'humanized version of capitalism' in which all the major problems of existence have, by and large, been solved.

Now while it can be argued that there is some objective basis for these essentially ideological speculations in the so-called developed world - perhaps not altogether unconnected with the same processes that have generated the condition of underdevelopment elsewhere - certainly the realities of the rest of mankind cannot be adequately understood with the aid of these ethnocentric ideo-concepts.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> 'Ideo-concept' refers to a concept that is essentially ideological.



domination. So if we are to avoid promiscuous labelling it would be more meaningful to talk in terms of a situation of 'status chaos' and any sensitive account of the dynamics of intergroup relations would have to take account of this factor and explore its implications for the development of political consciousness.

Nor can the situation we have described above be dismissed as purely a transitory stage in a process of change from one system of values to another. Rather, it is a reflection of a particular moment in an essentially colonial racio-cultural conjuncture in which elements of cultural imperialism merge with racio-deterministic rationalizations of domination to shape the world view of the participants. The salient question from the point of view of a sociology of conflict is to determine under what circumstances do these secondary non-antagonistic contradictions give way to what is objectively the principal contradiction, namely, between colonizer and colonized, oppressor and oppressed.

It will be obvious already that with the absence of anything approaching the basic premise of functionalist versions of stratification theory, namely, a common value system, a whole body of theory on stratification conceived as "the ranking of units in a system in accordance with the standards of a common value system"<sup>6</sup> is rendered irrelevant, or instructive in a purely negative sense. The main objection here is not primarily on the grounds of the ideological nature of functionalist structures (in the sense of their being

<sup>6</sup>

Parsons, T. 'A revised Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification' in Essays in Sociological Theory p. 388

justificatory), but simply that they are inappropriate for any meaningful understanding of particular conflict situations.

Other theories of stratification, though conceived in the spirit of opposition to functionalist thought, notably contributions by Tumin, Buckley and Lenski<sup>7</sup> among others, also reflect the same 'emasculatation' to which we referred earlier hence their limited usefulness in understanding a society which is riddled with some of the most peculiar contradictions world-historically.

While theories of minority-group relations and theories of marginality can be seen as adequate for the understanding of the position of the Asian and Cape Coloured communities respectively, they are only partially useful in understanding the total situation. Of course, it can be argued that the Africans also form a sociological, as distinct from a numerical, minority. Be that as it may, it would seem to us a priori that the position of Africans in South Africa has only superficial similarities to that of minority groups in other societies. If we examine the problem from the point of view of the effect of the presence of the minority' on the dynamics of the system it becomes obvious that the task of keeping a subjugated preponderant numerical majority in the state of a permanently subordinate sociological minority requires tactics, strategies, pseudo-solutions and rationalizations of a different nature to the hypocritical integration lip-service which is the normal stratagem in western societies.

---

7

Tumin, M. "Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis", American Sociological Review, Vol. 18, August 1953, pp. 387-394. Buckley, W. "Social Stratification and Social Differentiation", American Sociological Review, Vol. 23, August 1958, pp. 369-375. Lenski, G. Power and Privilege

South Africa is the most highly industrialized country in the African continent. The main source of this industrialization has been the discovery of mineral deposits which have been systematically exploited through the utilization of cheap labour. There has also been considerable growth in the manufacturing industry. So that whereas before the minerals were discovered agriculture dominated the economy by 1964 it accounted for only 9% of the national income. The following table<sup>8</sup> shows the pattern of growth over fifty years from 1920 to 1970 and also the changes in the contribution of the major sectors of the economy to the Gross Domestic product:

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		PERCENTAGE CONTRIBUTION			
Year	R - Million	Agriculture	Mining	Manufacturing	Commerce
1920	545,1	22,4	17,4	7,4	15,8
1930	541,5	14,4	15,1	9,4	15,2
1940	976,3	12,3	18,9	12,5	14,0
1950	2492,1	17,3	13,1	16,8	14,1
1960	4812,6	12,2	13,6	19,0	13,1
1970	11490,0	9,0	10,5	23,1	14,1

A few facts may be deduced from the above table, namely, the vast increase in the Gross Domestic Product; the decline in the contribution of agriculture, and mining to a lesser extent, to the total product; an increase in the

---

<sup>8</sup>

Horrell, M. South Africa: basic facts and figures, p. 45

contribution of manufacture, and an even contribution of the commercial sector.

Now while the process of industrialization is usually accompanied by an improvement in the standard of living of the majority of the population it does not follow that inequalities are necessarily reduced. In fact in western capitalist societies the initial stages of industrialization were accompanied by an exacerbation of social and economic inequalities between classes. In other words the process of industrialization has no 'levelling logic' in terms of the distribution of wealth. This of course follows logically from one of the fundamental premises of capitalist production, namely the ownership of the means of production by a minority of the population with the concomitant reduction of the majority into sellers of labour power.

The sociological manifestation of the above observation has been the centrality of the concept of class in the analysis of western capitalist societies since the nineteenth century. It is an interesting irony that a modified version of the same concept has been suggested for the understanding of the socialist societies of eastern Europe<sup>9</sup>.

While inequality remains a permanent feature of industrialized societies, it has been one of the central assumptions of even capitalist industrialization that with the general expansion and the availability of educational facilities increased social mobility becomes common.

---

<sup>9</sup> Djilas, M. The New Class.

Invariably this is seen as individual rather than group mobility within an open class system. Another feature has been the extension of political rights to all adults regardless of class position.

South African society presents an extreme departure from this model. The white minority who form about 17.2% of the total population of about 24 million has absolute monopoly of political power. By virtue of this fact the whites also have monopoly of the positions of privilege and power. The ruling National Party, with the backing of the white group and against the wishes of the other groups, maintains a rigid policy of racial regimentation. On the whole there is consensus among the whites about the necessity of the maintenance of white supremacy. Most of the differences that exist are on the question of the tactics to be adopted in view of the 'hostile' international climate and the 'deteriorating' political situation in Southern Africa.

Thus the statement that the whites in South Africa do not form a 'class-for-themselves'<sup>10</sup> is in itself not of much sociological significance in the economic sense because among the whites there are all conceivable classes. However, when one applies the concept of a 'power class' referring specifically to the monopoly of the major means of dominance (state power) as well as the monopoly of the instruments of violence (arms) there is a sense in which the whites do form a 'class-for-themselves'. This race consciousness is likely to assume ever more violent and fanatical forms with the escalation of the armed struggle by freedom - fighters in Southern Africa in

---

10

Randall, P. ed. Towards Social Change.

general. This does not preclude the possibility of internal splits and self criticism within the white group, but the problem will be seen as one of group survival.

The position of the white workers which according to a blind Marxist transplant would be viewed as problematic is likely to remain one of full identification with white supremacy for reasons to be shown later in this thesis. Again this does not preclude the possibility of some white trade unionists identifying themselves (mainly as individuals) with the black workers in their struggle for elemental workers' rights. But on the whole the semi-parasitical position of the white workers in the economy (made possible by their access to political power) will continue to militate against any possibility of an alliance with the oppressed. The position of the Indian and Coloured people will be determined by the balance of forces between the numerically stronger Africans and the dominant whites. And of course their position is further complicated by the lack of clarity about the specific type of humiliation which the ruling party have in store for them. Some Afrikaner politicians have talked of the possibility of a separate Coloured homeland while others have talked of parallel development without a 'colouredstan'. Others have suggested a closer relationship between the whites and the Coloureds while some have suggested a canton system as in Switzerland.

The system continues to thrive on an officially propagated atmosphere of impending crisis which enables the ruling party to pass more and more repressive legislation in order to deal with the system's enemies, namely, 'international communism' (which is responsible for every evil deed including streaking) and Black Power.

The specifically new features in the seventies are the re-emergence of overt class warfare between the white employers and the black workers; the shift of focus to rural politics as a result of the official fragmentation policy on ethnic lines; a revival of African nationalism infused with aspects of Black Power ideology; a pseudo - polarization among the whites between the tiny minority who believe in exploitation without racism and forced labour and the others; a more intense form of inter ethnic violent strife in the mines. It is tempting to interpret the latter as a typical pre-revolutionary situation as depicted by Fanon when the natives start beating each other up for nothing.

Now the prospect of liberation in the Portuguese colonies may well cause an acceleration of the fragmentation on ethnic lines in an attempt to create a comprador elite and 'lumpen bourgeoisie' within the Bantustans. This group would presumably have a genuine class interest in the maintenance of the status quo.

What is most pressing from the point of view of a sociological understanding of the society is that of a framework which would put all these changes and possibly the ones to come in a proper and intelligible perspective. This, so far we do not have. Perhaps the nature of the South African version of racial domination is specially conducive to the proliferation of modes of thought that are either completely ideological or utopian in Karl Mannheim's sense. The almost complete polarization that we find in South African society is reflected in the lack of consensus about the real nature of the system except for the most obvious superficialities.

The problem revolves around the question of race and class. To this researcher it is clear that as long as the question is posed in terms of an exclusive 'either or' no meaningful answers can be found to the theoretical problems which confront those who wish to understand South African society. The nearest thing to a definitive statement that we can make is that in this society we have a version of capitalist parasitism that is racially structured. There is no suggestion that race is epiphenomenal or that class is subordinate to race a priori. What cannot be denied is that the racial monopoly of political power expedites the exploitation of the black groups thus making even the white workers occupy a peculiarly parasitical position in the overall structuring of the society. Of course the interplay between the two factors is much more subtle than as represented here. An interesting case in point is that of a group of white farmers who reacted to recent government plans to consolidate one of the Bantustans by opting for homeland citizenship declaring that they did not care whether they were ruled by a black government or a white government as long as they could keep their farms.<sup>11</sup>

Further, this research is based on the conviction that a sociological analysis that is not historically grounded cannot illuminate the problems sufficiently. This then places a very strong stress on history which further complicates the problem because in a society like the one under study where group identities thrive on myths fact is

---

11

Rand Daily Mail, January 25, 1974. Mr. Matthews who farms some 500 morgen with Mr. Gordon McNeil is reported as having said "If we can't keep our farm under a white government, let's go to a Black government. I don't give a damn if it's a Black government as long as we can keep the farm. This is God's own country."



very difficult to disentangle from falsity. And of course the historical validity of a group myth is in fact hardly relevant to that group's perception of reality just as the scientific validity of the existence of God is irrelevant to how a Christian perceives his mission on earth. Further, by and large, South African history has been written from the point of view of the white minority anyway.

What we have done is to concentrate on what we consider to be the vital moments in the tragic drama that has culminated in present - day South Africa. The first moment is of course the exploitation of slave labour and the conquest of the Khoi Khoi people. The second moment is by far the most important from the point of view of relevance to the specific pattern of race relations which is to be found today, namely, the protracted military encounter between the Bantu speaking groups and the settlers conceptualized by means of the term 'frontier'. The third moment is the discovery of minerals and industrialization which theoretically could have ushered in new modes of inter-group relations. The fourth and final moment is the seizure of state power by the Afrikaner segment of the ruling white minority which has led to the present consolidation of white supremacy.

It will be obvious already that what we have called the vital moments implies an element of choice in terms of the perceived importance of events or institutions for the shaping of the future society. If one were to choose institutions alone for instance one would look at the role of religion or the presence of the institution of slavery for the shaping of inter-group relations. We have refrained from concentrating on the institutions per se because we would like to place these institutions within the overall development

of the society. In other words the stress is on process rather than isolated occurrences. Thus institutions have to be understood within the framework of attempts by various groups to solve specific problems.

The central theme that runs through all four moments analyzed here is that of conquest, coercion and exploitation. It would be quite legitimate for other theorists to point to the cooperation and complementarity that has taken place between the various racial groups in South Africa. Our reaction to that would be that whatever cooperation has existed on the group level should be analyzed within an overall framework of conflict. The four moments thus merge into one another. While each moment presents a new development, new problems and new solutions, it inherits some of the features of the previous moment and shapes and is shaped by them. Neither does this imply an original moment which has determined everything except perhaps the mere presence of colonizers. Instead there have been various theoretical possibilities and the duty of a sensitive analysis is to show how and why some possibilities rather than others materialized.

In the South African situation this entails an inevitable re-interpretation of history and also more stress on the symbolic aspect. Of course this procedure is a delicate one and is especially vulnerable to the rigorous formalities of historiography. In fact ideally such an undertaking should have taken place after the re-writing of South African history that is taking place at the moment.

From the point of view of sociology such an approach is probably open to the accusation of being parochial in that it highlights the inadequacy of some of the concepts which were specifically developed to cope with the specific

of the society. In other words the stress is on process rather than isolated occurrences. Thus institutions have to be understood within the framework of attempts by various groups to solve specific problems.

The central theme that runs through all four moments analyzed here is that of conquest, coercion and exploitation. It would be quite legitimate for other theorists to point to the cooperation and complementarity that has taken place between the various racial groups in South Africa. Our reaction to that would be that whatever cooperation has existed on the group level should be analyzed within an overall framework of conflict. The four moments thus merge into one another. While each moment presents a new development, new problems and new solutions, it inherits some of the features of the previous moment and shapes and is shaped by them. Neither does this imply an original moment which has determined everything except perhaps the mere presence of colonizers. Instead there have been various theoretical possibilities and the duty of a sensitive analysis is to show how and why some possibilities rather than others materialized.

In the South African situation this entails an inevitable re-interpretation of history and also more stress on the symbolic aspect. Of course this procedure is a delicate one and is especially vulnerable to the rigorous formalities of historiography. In fact ideally such an undertaking should have taken place after the re-writing of South African history that is taking place at the moment.

From the point of view of sociology such an approach is probably open to the accusation of being parochial in that it highlights the inadequacy of some of the concepts which were specifically developed to cope with the specific

realities of western Europe. However, while we would stress the universality of human institutions we also have to stress the peculiarities of various systems in view of the various problems that different groups have attempted to solve. And it is only by developing new concepts and handling old ones with more flexibility that the science of society can ever cope with the variety of systems and their tendencies.

CHAPTER TWOSLAVERY IN THE CAPE 1658-1833

The existence of a social order based on the exploitation of slave labour in the Cape from 1658 till 1833, though often referred to, has not been systematically examined. Just what consequences Cape slavery had for the future development of South African society in general still remains obscure. Of course most historians use the existence of chattel black labour to explain the attitudes of the early farmers and their descendants towards manual labour. The conventional assumption is that had the Dutch East India Company solved its labour problems by importing free white labour the course of development of Cape society would have been profoundly different.

There is no doubt about the validity of this assumption. What it does, albeit in a platitudinous fashion, is to account for the emergence of certain patterns of inter-group relations which rest on assumptions about the inferiority and superiority of certain groups and the suitability or otherwise of certain forms of labour for these groups. However, the puzzle is that the same scholars who argue that slavery was responsible for the emergence of racist ideology also assert that the early Cape society which was slave-based was a racially 'open' society. Religion rather than race was the main criterion for determining social position.

For instance, according to Mac Crone<sup>1</sup>

"Within, and upon the boundaries of the settlement there had come together the most heterogeneous collection of human elements that ever consisted a psycho-social situation. There were the Company officials who combined the functions of trade and of government; there were the Company workmen and soldiers engaged in fulfilling their contracts; there were the freemen, all, ex-soldiers, sailors, or workmen of the Company who were engaged in tempting fortune on their own; there were the slaves and the Hottentots; and, finally there were the ships' crews, who from time to time appeared upon the scene to enjoy the benefits of the refreshment station. Within this situation the patterns of relations is not easy to define in any positive way,. But with regard to the relations between Europeans and non-Europeans there appears to be ample evidence to show that the factors of race and skin-colour as such played little or no part in determining the attitude of the former to the latter....the line of distinction between groups was less affected by differences of race or colour of skin than by differences in religion."

Troup<sup>2</sup> presumably following MacCrone has written that "In the early days the distinction in the Colony, as in the Indies, was not between White and Black, but between Pagan and Christian and no Christian could be held in slavery."

Keppel - Jones<sup>3</sup> also observes that "the first settlers had made distinctions of religion only Christian and Heathen. The baptized black was socially equal to a white Christian."

<sup>1</sup>Mac Crone, I.D. Race Attitudes in South Africa, p.40

<sup>2</sup>Troup, F. South Africa. A Historical Introduction, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup>Keppel - Jones, A. South Africa, A Short Story, p. 38

Now if the latter assertion is shown to be valid, we would have to revise the thesis relating to slavery as the major determinant in the emergence of the particular version of race relations patterns which have characterised the later history of South Africa. Surely it is not very convincing to use slavery to explain the emergence of racism while at the same time asserting that the slave-based social order was in fact 'colour blind' and only religiously exclusive.

What we shall attempt to do in this Chapter is to examine the nature of Cape slavery and explore its implications for later developments.

The problem of slavery in the New World has recently attracted the attention of scholars of all persuasions. The most important issues relating to the nature and consequences of slavery have not yet been resolved. However, the controversy has thrown up a lot of useful insights into the nature of various slave holding regimes both as regards their wider common phenomena and their uniqueness in certain respects.

To over simplify, there are two points of view with which scholars have generally worked. Firstly, there are those who look to the religious, ideological, institutional, and psychological inheritance of the various slave-holding regimes, notably, Frank Tannenbaum, Gilberto Freyre, and Stanley Elkins.<sup>4</sup> They stress the

---

<sup>4</sup>Tannenbaum, Frank, Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas; Freyre, G. The Masters and the Slaves, a Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization; Elkins, S. Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life.

27

impact of factors like Roman Catholic universalism and institutional prerogatives, long contact with Africa, Moorish occupation, and a long slave-holding tradition in law and custom in the case of the Iberian slave-holding regimes and the absence of these factors in their Northern European counterparts. On the other hand theorists like Eric Williams and Marvin Harris<sup>5</sup> have stressed the similarities in the nature of slavery as a system of economic exploitation.

Both groups to some extent have approached the question of slavery from the point of view of race relations. Of special interest to us are the points of view of two scholars who have made contributions to the whole discussion from outside the two trends of thought, namely, Hermann Hoetink and Eugene Genovese.<sup>6</sup> Hoetink's contribution lies in his skepticism about the structural-institutional explanation of race relations which he sees as some form of "sociologicistic optimism". He stresses the centrality of 'somatic norm images' for the aesthetic dimension as determined by the relative degree of pigmentation in different European peoples. We shall not take up Hoetink's interesting views at this stage.

Genovese notes that both points of view have contributed immensely to our understanding of the slave societies of the Americas, and that each is capable of considerable modification since neither, by

---

<sup>5</sup>Williams, E. Capitalism and Slavery; Harris, M. Patterns of Race in the Americas

<sup>6</sup>Hoetink, H. Two Variants in Caribbean Race Relations; Genovese, Eugene, The World the Slaveholders Made.



itself, can answer the question to which it addresses itself. He sees part of the problem in the common starting point, namely, race relations. According to Genovese

What is needed is absorption of these contending viewpoints into a more adequate theoretical framework, for each is in itself, much too narrow to yield satisfactory results. This narrowness, in addition, has led to their having obscured some of the fundamental features of the slave regimes, as well as the most important questions concerning the place of those regimes in the history of European expansion and the rise of capitalism as a world system.

To transcend both points of view Genovese proposes to focus on the nature of constituent social classes.

The most important problems inherent in the study of Afro-American slave societies can only be solved by an analysis of constituent classes, beginning with the ruling classes, and therefore slavery must be understood primarily as a class question and only secondarily as a race or a narrowly economic question.

Perhaps the most attractive aspect of Genovese's views, at least on the conceptual level, is his concept of class which, though not specifically defined, encompasses much more than the standard narrow economism of most sociological writings on class, because it draws our attention to the generality of the phenomenon of class as well as the historically specific dimension hence:

Every social class and therefore every slave-holding class, is unique. The terms 'bourgeoisie', 'proletariat', 'slavocracy'

---

<sup>7</sup>Genovese Ibid. pp. 10 and 14.

are essential in historical investigations, for they provide the starting point and underline common characteristics that lead us direct to the mainsprings of social change. But the bane of Marxian interpretation has been the transformation of that starting point into an end product by promiscuous application of class labels as a substitute for historical specificity.<sup>8</sup>

Central to our author's analysis is the distinction between bourgeois and seigneurial slave-holding classes. Regarding the question of race he notes that colour prejudice, blood pride, and other forms of ethnocentricity preceded slavery and prepared the way for racism, understood as an ideology of oppression and subordination. The transition from the former to the latter occurred by means of such institutionalized mechanisms of discrimination as the slave codes, the plantation regime, and the organized caste restrictions against freedmen. However, whereas in some societies these discriminations lost some or much of their force after general abolition, in the United States abolition reinforced them. Further, the extent and depth of racism under slavery depended primarily on the degree to which the slave-holding class acquired a pure or seigneurial character, in contradistinction to a bourgeois character. Hence "wherever we find slaveholding classes with bourgeois rather than seigneurial origins, we generally find a tendency toward more intense racism."<sup>9</sup>

Though we have started this Chapter with these preliminary

---

<sup>8</sup>Genovese *ibid.* p. 19

<sup>9</sup>Genovese *ibid.* p.110.

observations about the problem of slavery in the New World we shall not be concerned with testing the validity of these theories. This in fact would be an extremely interesting undertaking, however, it would need a more thorough and more systematic examination of the problem. Our interest in these theories of slavery derives from our desire to understand the nature of Cape slavery and its bearing on later developments in the formation of South African society in general, and on inter-group relations in particular. No doubt a sensitive analysis of Cape slavery would, by definition, throw some light on some of these issues; however, the primary aim of this Chapter is to understand Cape slavery with the aid

of these theories. We have also dwelt on Genovese's contribution not because we think that his is the final word on the problem, indeed, we suspect that an examination of the Cape situation would throw a lot of doubt on his stress on abolition as a test case as to how far deep rooted slavery was in any social order. However, it seems to us that because he attempts to formulate a theoretical framework which subsumes both the 'institutional' approach as well as what one might call the 'economic-ecological' approach, he thereby places the whole discussion in proper perspective.

In approaching the problem of slavery at the Cape we have to note at the very outset that though the economy of the early Cape rested on the exploitation of slave labour, the phenomenon of the plantation in the classical sense was, by and large, absent there. This was a result of a combination of a number of circumstances. To begin with, the Cape station was originally intended to serve clear

and limited purposes, namely the provision of refreshments for ships sailing to the East Indies. It was a minor state-llite of a commercial complex which extended from the Nerther-lands to the Far East and the value of its produce did not lie in its worth in the international market but in expediting, or oiling the wheels of the Company.

Now it is conceivable that if the Company had not resorted to colonization in solving its production problems quite a different form of slavery would have ensued. It is also conceivable that if the monopolistic principles of the Company had not strangled the Cape market something approximating the plantation might have developed in the Cape. Given the above factors the nearest thing to a plantation to be found at the Cape were the vast estates of some of the Company officials in the heyday of official dominance in the days of Adriaan van der Stel for example.

Already, from the above observations it should be clear, in line with Genovese's observation, that both historical and immediate factors had to be filtered through the institutions appropriate to specific ruling classes if they were to have force.

Before we examine the origins of Cape slavery we have to pursue the point about the absence of the institution of the plantation at the Cape. This is important because most of the discussion of slavery in the Americas has been based on the presence of large scale plantations as the units of analysis hence the concept 'plantation America'. It is commonly applied moreover only to a property producing a single crop or possibly two crops grown primarily for

export. Plantations accordingly are a form of great landed estate, usually in colonial or semi-colonial countries, which raise such tropical or semi-tropical products as cotton, sugar, rubber, coffee, tea, rice, pineapples and bananas, with a labouring class kept in economic if not political servitude.<sup>10</sup>

Over a century ago Frederick Law Olmsted<sup>11</sup> who had noted the "great difference in the mode of life of the slaves when living on the large plantations, and when living on farms or in town establishments, or on such small plantations that they are intimately associated with white families", wrote:

Religious, instructed, and seeking further enlightenment, industrious, energetic, and self-directing; well fed, respected, and trusted by their master, and this master an illiterate, indolent and careless man. A very different state of things, this, from what I saw on the great planter's estate, where a profit of \$100,000 was made in a single year, but where 500 negroes were constantly kept under whip, where religion was only a pow-wow or cloak for immorality, and where the negro was considered to be of an inferior race, especially designed by Providence to be kept in a position he then occupied. A very different thing and strongly suggesting what a very different thing this negro servitude might be in general, were the ruling disposition of the South more just, democratic, and sensible.

Be that as it may, theorizing about plantation slavery should not be allowed to obscure what is crucial and the essence of all slave societies, namely, the master-slave

<sup>10</sup>McBridge, G. L. Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences p. 143

<sup>11</sup>Olmsted, F. Back Country pp. 156. 158.

relationship, another way of saying that men own other men as chattels. Further, the absence of large-scale plantations should not lead to an a priori dismissal of slavery at the Cape as unimportant. Surely, bearing in mind the question of the scale of the society, what is important is whether slavery was one of many systems of labour exploitation or not. In this way we can determine how deep the master-slave relationship penetrated the whole society including groups that did not own slaves.

The presence of slaves at the Cape was a result of the labour scarcity which plagued van Riebeeck's settlement from a very early date. Having failed to coerce the Khoi Khoi to labour for the Company, and faced with the growing demand by the free burghers for cheap labour, the authorities resorted to importing slaves from Madagascar, Bengal, the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, Ceylon and the East Indian islands. Trade on the west coast of Africa was forbidden to the Dutch East India Company since that area belonged to its sister Company, namely, the Dutch West India Company.

In line with the Company's principle of monopoly no private trading in slaves was allowed. This prohibition remained valid until the 1790's when Commissioners Nederburgh and Frykenius decided for reasons of economy that the slave trade should no longer be carried on by the Company. It is interesting to note that one of the requests made by the four burgher delegates to the Council of Seventeen was that the slave trade should be open to private individuals.

relationship, another way of saying that men own other men as chattels. Further, the absence of large-scale plantations should not lead to an a priori dismissal of slavery at the Cape as unimportant. Surely, bearing in mind the question of the scale of the society, what is important is whether slavery was one of many systems of labour exploitation or not. In this way we can determine how deep the master-slave relationship penetrated the whole society including groups that did not own slaves.

The presence of slaves at the Cape was a result of the labour scarcity which plagued van Riebeeck's settlement from a very early date. Having failed to coerce the Khoi Khoi to labour for the Company, and faced with the growing demand by the free burghers for cheap labour, the authorities resorted to importing slaves from Madagascar, Bengal, the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, Ceylon and the East Indian islands. Trade on the west coast of Africa was forbidden to the Dutch East India Company since that area belonged to its sister Company, namely, the Dutch West India Company.

In line with the Company's principle of monopoly no private trading in slaves was allowed. This prohibition remained valid until the 1790's when Commissioners Nederburgh and Frykenius decided for reasons of economy that the slave trade should no longer be carried on by the Company. It is interesting to note that one of the requests made by the four burgher delegates to the Council of Seventeen was that the slave trade should be open to private individuals.

Broadly speaking, the slave population was divided into two sections, namely, those owned by the Company, and those owned privately by the settlers and the officials of the Company. The Company slaves were housed in the Company barracks, the 'Loots' of which Mentzel gave the following description:

It is a quadrangular building, enclosing a large square, and is covered with a flat, plastered roof. The front of the building is on the side facing the Church, the back is towards the Company's gardens, where the gardeners' quarters are. The male and female slaves were supposed to occupy different compartments, but generally they live promiscuously as man and wife. A number of hammocks, given by the sailors to the female slaves, are hung round a small court.... There are two rooms set apart for the supervisors, one of whom looks after the male and the other the female slaves when they are at work, for each slave has a definite task allotted to him or her. At 8 p.m. the gates of the lodge are locked and the roll is called; at 9 they are re-opened to permit the soldier and sailor visitors to the female slaves to depart, for no stranger is permitted to spend the night with the slaves. As soon as the gates are re-locked the key is delivered to the Independent Fiscal and fetched again in the morning.... I have been inside this building once only to deliver a wagon of salt for the slaves but I can give no description of the quarters inside, for the stench made me beat a speedy retreat.<sup>12</sup>

These Company slaves were employed in various public works - the garden, the hospital, stables, and at the outposts. Some were employed in subordinate executive

<sup>12</sup> Mentzel, F. A Geographical and Topographical Description of Cape of Good Hope, p. 116.



positions like putting down smuggling (subject to the directions of the Independent Fiscal), and as assistants to the police officer and as executioner's men. Mentzel described the latter category as follows: "Such slaves are called 'Ka ffirs', they are armed with a sword with iron hilt, carrying a 'palang' or heavy club, wear a grey uniform..." They received clothing from the Company once a year but indications are that most of them sold their clothes as soon as they got them and went about "in the filthiest rags imaginable". According to Mentzel's account

Few have some self-respect and are more ambitious, and succeed in earning some money in their spare time on Sundays and buy clothes of a superior type. Some also obtain money or goods from their reputed wives who have their own way of earning at the expense of soldiers and sailors.<sup>13</sup>

Further, cross-cutting this division between Company slaves and those owned privately were other divisions of a racial and cultural kind among the Cape slave population. De Kock divides them into four classes: negroes, Asiatics in general, Malays in particular, and those born in the colony. The roots of racial stereotyping are quite discernible in the following descriptions of the slave categories.

The negroes, who were the least valuable came from Madagascar and the African coast; of low intelligence, obstinate and intractable in disposition, they became hewers of wood and drawers of water, females were engaged as washerwomen and in other employments

---

<sup>13</sup>Mentzel, op. cit., p.116 .

requiring merely strength of limb and body. On the other hand, the Malays - one writer called the Malay the 'king of slaves' - were the most active and docile, but at the same time the most dangerous; they were impatient of injury, vindictive and easily provoked. It did not take these yellow-complexioned workers long to become familiar with almost every trade or calling. As builders and house painters they were soon in great demand. They made excellent masons, good confectioners and cooks, expert drivers and incomparable fishermen... It was the Cape born slave, however, often the product of a European and a slave girl, whom the inhabitants preferred as a class.<sup>14</sup>

On the same point Montzel wrote:

All these races live indiscriminately together in the 'loots' but one type of slave is regarded as inferior and has to be kept apart. These have been brought from the land of Terletan, situated on Rio de la Goa. They are a foul evil-smelling race, with villainous slits in their faces which have been cut into all sorts of patterns. Their quarters are in the basement of the lodge, apart from the other slaves. To them are allotted the dirtiest and the most unpleasant tasks.<sup>15</sup>

What we have here are gradations within the slave population in terms of culture, race and skill viewed from the slave owner's point of view. So in fact the preference for the Cape born slave is not only accountable for in terms of Hoetink's somatic norm image theory but has profound cultural, economic and even political aspects.

Before examining the position of the privately owned slaves we have to note another important function which

---

<sup>14</sup>De Kock, V. Those in Bondage. p. 52

<sup>15</sup>Montzel, C.F. p. 124.

the institution of slavery and its barracks fulfilled, namely catering for the sexual needs of the free white society.

Again Ventzel put it:

They herd together like animals, and have no higher moral sense. Female slaves are always ready to offer their bodies for a trifle; and towards evening, one can see a string of soldiers and sailors entering the lodge where they misspend their time until the clock strikes 9. After that hour no strangers are allowed to remain in the lodge. The Company does nothing to prevent this promiscuous intercourse, since, for one thing, it tends to multiply the slave population, and does away with the necessity of importing fresh slaves. Three or four generations of this admixture (for daughters follow their mothers' footsteps) have produced a half-caste population - a mestizo class - but a slight shade darker than some Europeans.<sup>16</sup>

Indeed there is evidence that towards the end of the eighteenth century there were very few arrivals at the Cape, mainly bounded convicts of some description from Batavia, because labour requirements could be met by natural increase among the slaves.

This whole problem of colonial connubium or sexual imperialism is probably one of the most interesting aspects of race and class domination. At the Cape, for instance, the problem of the shortage of women must have been very acute. Such desperate attempts at solution like importing

---

<sup>16</sup>Ventzel, C.F. Ibid. p. 125

orphans from Holland provide clear evidence. According to the 1791 census there were 31,950 Europeans and slaves at the Cape then (no record taken of free blacks or Khoi Khoi living within the colony). The sex ratio within the slave population was 11,026 adult males and only 3,687 adult females, a surplus of 7,339 males over females. So it is no wonder that a lot of slaves had Khoi Khoi women living with them. Now whereas it was normal practice at the Cape for children born out of wedlock to assume the status of the mother which meant that children of such unions would in fact be free, the white slave owners found it more rewarding to enslave them hence a regulation of 1775 required that all such children should be 'apprenticed' to the farmers until the age of 25. As a system of labour exploitation through compulsion Cape slavery had this touch of the 'human' which its successor systems of labour regimentation e.g. compound labour, completely lack. Of course this should not be interpreted to mean that it was any less harsh.

Cape burghers and farmers obtained their slaves on the local market either privately or at a public auction.

With the delegation of the functions relating to the production of provisions to the farmers their need for slaves became more pressing than those of the Company. As an indication of this shift in function the breakdown of the Cape free and unfree population was as follows - in 1713 (after the small pox epidemic): A slave population of 1,745 slaves served a free population of 2,598. On the other hand the Company owned no more than 440 slaves.

Among the settlers, ownership of slaves soon became a symbol of high status. Some of the officials involved in large scale farming activities possessed well over 200 slaves each.

On De Kock's reckoning

Almost every colonist of rank possessed from 10 to 20 slaves including women and children - 3 slaves, it was computed, being needed to perform a task which would normally be done by a single hand in Holland.<sup>17</sup>

It was very important for settlers' wives to have a few female slaves from Bengal, the Coromandel coast, Surat and Macassar not only for status reasons but also because of their skill in needlework. 'The ladies of the Cape value their services because they take pride in fine needlework, knitting and crocheting, and are very fond of hand-made lace'.<sup>18</sup>

Many of the private residents depended on hiring out their skilled slaves for their livelihood. For instance when the Company undertook large-scale enterprises like road-construction or building a new hospital the burghers took advantage of the large demand for labour and hired out their slaves. Sometimes this process of hiring out led to the loosening of the bondage for instance in cases where the master allowed the slave to go looking for work with the stipulation that he should pay him so much per month. The returns on skilled slave labour also inspired certain masters to apprentice their slaves to European craftsmen for instruction in trades

---

<sup>17</sup>De Kock, v. op. cit., p. 54

<sup>18</sup>Mentzel, C.F. op. cit., p. 126

like tailoring, wig-making, etc.

Some slave-owning farmers made contracts with Khoi Khoi (for 46 rix dollars) to give lessons to their slaves in the manipulation of a wagon and a span of horses. The Company also apprenticed two or more of its young slaves to each smith, carpenter, mason, or other master mechanic, "to be taught trades, so that they may become more useful to the Company". This apprenticeship must not be confused with the wider phenomenon of the enslavement of indigenous groups' children for cheap labour which also went under this euphemistic expression.

Before we examine the position of the chattels at the Cape in further detail it is necessary to comment on one of the most important aspects of slavery as a system of labour exploitation, namely, its effect in shaping the world view of the slaveholder including his own self-image. Further, we would expect that this world view did not become a monopoly of the slaveholders. To the extent that bondage and freedom coincided with the process of ideological infection extended to the other whites who were in fact nearer to the slaves in terms of objective class position than to the masters, for example, the so-called 'Knechts'.

Interestingly enough, some clues to certain aspects of this problem are provided by the Council of India's pronouncements on the question of slavery. Though they did not have any objections to the Company's holding slaves they had a different opinion on the issue of allowing free men to have slaves. In 1658 they expressed their opinion that the colony should be established and run by Europeans, as our

nation is so constituted that as soon as they have the convenience of slaves they become lazy and unwilling to put forth their hands to work ...." In 1684 they reiterated their previous warning, and stipulated that only a limited number of slaves would be sent, "in order not to let the colonists glide into idleness...and make them unaccustomed to labour". Van Riebeeck's complaint about the European preferring "like seigneurs to spank about with the cane in the hand and leave everything to the slaves" echoes the same point.<sup>19</sup>

While the Council of India were wrong in attributing the tendency they observed to some innate constitution of their nation, the phenomenon of the slaveholders' leisure class consciousness is in fact indisputable. This is an almost universal phenomenon and so there is nothing Dutch about it. What can be said in this particular case is that no degree of calvinistic efficiency and work ethic could hinder its development. Chosenness in these circumstances came to be interpreted as the privilege to be served and hence exemption from toil.

However, the Council of Policy at the Cape, when asked by the Seventeen to recommend in 1716 as to whether slaves or free white workers should be imported, came down in favour of importing slaves, condemning "white labour as lazy, incompetent, intractable, liable to drunkenness and, withal, more expensive than slave labour." Twenty-five years later Baron van Imhoff commented:

---

<sup>19</sup>De Kock, V. op. cit., p. 126.

I believe it would have been for the better had we, when this colony was founded, commenced with Europeans and brought them hither in such numbers that hunger and want would have forced them to work. But having imported slaves, every common or ordinary European becomes a gentleman and prefers to be served than serve. We have in addition the fact that the majority of farmers in this colony are not farmers in the real sense of the word, but owners of plantations and that many of them consider it a shame to work with their own hands....<sup>20</sup>

The slaveholders' world view which comes to be shared by most of the whites in a colonial situation, based as it is, on a dichotomous view of society, namely, the white master and the black slave, though in effect a misrepresentation of reality, seems to us much more fundamental and decisive in shaping the dynamics of inter-group interaction. It will be remembered that at this time in the Cape there were various groups with varying degrees of freedom or unfreedom, and dependence on the Company. The 'knechts', for example, though supposed to be free white labourers were far from free in the usual sense of the word, and of course the Khoi Khoi, though theoretically free, were more or less like serfs. Also there were free blacks some of whom owned slaves.

However, the phenomenon of the isolation of the dominant aspect of social reality and its promotion into an all-encompassing world view is, in our view, at the very centre of the formation of ideologies of domination. Its specific feature in slave-based colonial situations is that the white

---

<sup>20</sup>Baron van Imhoff quoted in De Kock, V., p. 63.



master/black slave dichotomy is buttressed by religion, culture, economic class and political power at one and the same time. It will be obvious from the preceding remarks that though it is true to say that at this stage in the development of Cape society racist ideology had not matured into an ideology of oppression and subordination it would be misleading to talk in an idyllic fashion about a colour-blind social order. Even before slavery and the frontier had crystallized race super and subordination into a coherent racist ideology factors like ethnocentrism and prejudice were already there, and cannot be encompassed in the usual conventional manner by saying that the only criterion for status at the Cape was religion.

This brings us to the question of religion and slavery at the Cape. Now this is easily the most difficult problem to disentangle in view of the common belief among South African historians about the mildness of slavery at the Cape and the relative ease of manumission etc. The Cape is an interesting test case for some of the assumptions of the institutional approach to the problem of slavery because if the point frequently made about Catholic universalism versus Protestant particularism has any validity we would expect the slave regime in the Cape to resemble that of the Deep South rather, than say, that of Brazil. However, the same finding could be interpreted as a vindication of the bourgeois versus seigniorial ruling class. So, like in any other sociological investigation, the findings would be by no means conclusive since the effect of other factors would have to be taken care of, a problem which is not readily solved.

The problem is made even more complex by the inconsistency and ambiguity of the Company itself towards the question of religion and bondage. While it has been easy for historians to assert and reaffirm the fact that a Christian could not be held in bondage, in their attempts to prove that religion rather than any other factor (specifically race) was the chief determinant of class and status position at the Cape, this assertion, like all simplistic assertions, does not stand up to close examination. A regulation of this nature, even if supposedly valid, cannot be taken at its face value in any serious sociological analysis. To believe that slave-owners would free their slaves on baptism (let alone encourage them to be converted) when they had labour problems, defies even first-rate naivety.

The first point to note is that during the whole period of the rule of the Dutch East India Company at the Cape, Church and State were inextricably intertwined. The ecclesiastical court which was established had the direction of all educational institutions. So we have sick-comforters acting as school masters and the content of education having a strong religious bias.

One of the most controversial issues in the early days of the Company was the question of baptism. It had been customary for chaplains to baptise all slave children, whether half-breeds or pure blacks as long as they were presented for that purpose. It was also a matter of routine to warn the owners that such children be brought up in a Christian manner.

However, in the early 1660's a whole controversy arose and an appeal was made to Batavia for a definite ruling. Early in 1664 a reply was received which stipulated that slave children should be baptised provided there was a definite undertaking to have them instructed in Christianity.

Ten years later the Church Council suggested that the custom of baptizing black children whose parents were heathens should be altered. The local church authorities felt that such children should not be ~~baptized~~ until the parents had been drilled in Christianity and ~~baptized~~. They also felt that children of mixed blood, however, should be baptized without delay.

From 1721 onward's no slaves were allowed to stand as sponsors at the font, or in loco parentis. As De Kock informs us, it was noticed that "to the great annoyance and disrespect of the Europeans" the children of the free blacks and slaves were generally better dressed, when being baptized, than those of the white inhabitants. A decision was therefore made that these black infants should no longer be permitted at the font with such adornments as worn hitherto. Ministers even suggested that slave children and other illegitimate babies should be baptized at different times to those appointed for Europeans.

The whole question of baptism and bondage was

However, in the early 1660's a whole controversy arose and an appeal was made to Batavia for a definite ruling. Early in 1664 a reply was received which stipulated that slave children should be baptised provided there was a definite undertaking to have them instructed in Christianity.

Ten years later the Church Council suggested that the custom of baptizing black children whose parents were heathens should be altered. The local church authorities felt that such children should not be ~~baptized~~ until the parents had been drilled in Christianity and ~~baptized~~. They also felt that children of mixed blood, however, should be baptized without delay.

From 1721 onward no slaves were allowed to stand as sponsors at the font, or in loco parentis. As De Kock informs us, it was noticed that "to the great annoyance and disrespect of the Europeans" the children of the free blacks and slaves were generally better dressed, when being baptized, than those of the white inhabitants. A decision was therefore made that these black infants should no longer be permitted at the font with such adornments as worn hitherto. Ministers even suggested that slave children and other illegitimate babies should be baptized at different times to those appointed for Europeans.

The whole question of baptism and bondage was

settled in 1792 (as a fait accompli) when the Church Council in Cape Town, in reply to a Church Council of Stellenbosch query about the issue, declared that neither the laws temporal nor the laws spiritual prohibited the retention of baptized persons in slavery.

To confirm that baptism was never a passport to freedom Mentzel wrote:

It is a lamentable paradox to baptize slave children, initiate them into the truths of the teachings of Christ, and yet allow them to be brought up in vice and corruption by their heathen parents and their associates. Though Christian they remain slaves and become as dissolute and depraved as their heathen relations.<sup>21</sup>

There is evidence that in the early stages the Company did attempt to implement the regulation about freedom and baptism. However, in the case of the privately owned slaves this could not make any sense since it was the masters who were responsible for the conversion of their slaves.

We can sense the attitudes (at least officially) at the early stages of the settlement towards slavery from the following enactments resulting from the visit to the Cape of Governor-General van Goens in 1682 and the sojourn three years later of High Commissioner van Rheeде.

1. That every half-breed could claim emancipation, at the age of 25 if male or 22 if female, provided that he or she professed Christianity and could speak Dutch.
2. That slaves, imported from abroad, after 30 years, and negro slaves born at the Cape on attaining the age of forty,

---

<sup>21</sup>Mentzel, op cit. p.45

were to have their freedom (as a favour not a right) upon payment of £8.6s.8d. and provided they professed Christianity and spoke Dutch.

3. That slave children under 12 were to be put to school, and those over 12 be instructed twice a week. All were to attend church twice on Sundays, and to be taught the Heidelberg Catechism.

4. That marriage between Europeans and freed slaves of full colour was prohibited, but allowed between Europeans and half-breeds.

5. That care was to be taken not to drive slaves to desert by cruel treatment. But fugitive slaves recaptured could be flogged and enchained, as a warning to others. It can be seen that these slave codes, even in their most liberal and almost utopian early formulation were anything but colour blind.

Now we turn to the problem of the legal framework within which interaction between masters and slaves took place. On a general level this problem has three aspects, namely, first the legal rights or standing, if any, which slaves had in the metropolitan country, secondly, the laws which governed the institution of slavery in the colony, and thirdly, the effectiveness of the process of law enforcement within the colony.

Now slavery at the Cape in the days of the Company was regulated by the laws made and promulgated by the Governor and the Council of Policy, the Statutes of India, in so far as they were not contrary to the existing laws of the Council of Policy; and Roman Law, in so far as it was not

contrary to the laws of the Council of Policy, the Statutes of India and the spirit of jurisprudence.

Under Roman Law, though the slave had no civil rights (being non-citizens) they were in fact supposed to be subject to the laws of nature. So to the extent that they cohabited there was, to some extent a degree of de facto recognition of this fact. At the Cape slaves could neither marry nor claim the right to dispose of their children. Cohabitation was allowed but this did not imply a right to the offspring of the union. Though the question put to those who appeared before the matrimonial court was "Are you a Christian and not a heathen or a slave?" even the profession of Christianity gave no sanction to the marriage of the slave. This throws further doubt on the thesis that religion was the sole determinant of status in the early Cape. Further, a slave or even an emancipated black, who had carnal connection with a white woman was liable to the death penalty - "it being a detestable thing that a heathen should amalgamate with a Christian, and contrary to divine and human law."

It was one of the most central principles of Roman Law that children not born in legal wedlock inherit the status of the mother. So any Cape burgher could live for years with a slave woman and produce children by her and later sell both mother and children as they were legally his slaves. However, a Batavia resolution of 17th January 1772 stipulated that the mother, as well as the offspring begotten by a master with her should never be sold, whether the estate

were solvent or insolvent, but should be emancipated after the death of the master.

The slave code of Governor Tulbagh and his Council prohibited the presence of more than 20 slaves at the burial of a companion. The number was regulated according to the rank of the owner of the deceased. The slave owners were also forbidden, in the spirit of the sumptuary laws, to dress their slaves in mourning clothes when a member of their family died. We can see here the effect of solutions to problems caused by the very existence of slavery in the colonial setting in the Far East on relationships between masters and slaves. The very idea of sumptuary laws was motivated by the desire to curtail an already marked tendency towards conspicuous consumption of a colonial nature which was partly a result of as well as a cause of smuggling and other tendencies detrimental to the prosperity of the Company.

Punishment of crime in the early Cape has left a reputation for its unequalled severity. Torture was part of the accepted judicial procedure for slaves and Khoi Khoi and its counterpart for the white section of the population was confinement to the 'Black Hole' with a diet of only bread and water. The death sentence was not regarded as the harshest form of punishment any offender could get. Instead there were gradations or degrees of severity in the manner of death depending on the status of the offender as well as the nature of the crime.

Mentzel gave the following description of the process of justice in this era:



Slaves, whether male or female, who fail to improve after correction by the masters, or who commit an offence that calls for severe punishment, are taken before the Fiscal or before the Landdrost and are condemned to be flogged. They are tied naked, to the stocks and two 'kaffirs', armed with rods (consisting of a bundle of split bamboo-canes), scourge them unmercifully until the blood runs down their backs. Salt water is then rubbed into the wounds. In addition, they may be condemned to wear fetters. They may be chained by one leg to a log which they have to drag after them or carry in their arms to enable them to walk. Another punishment is to rivet heavy iron rings on each leg.<sup>22</sup>

Offences like murder, arson, robbery and burglary by runaway slaves were punishable by death.

A murderer is broken on the wheel; the same punishment is meted out for the crime of arson. They are stretched upon a double wooden cross and tightly lashed to it and their arms and legs are broken by blows from a heavy iron club. In some cases the coup de grace is then administered by a blow on the chest with some instrument; if this is not done, the wretched man may be stretched by chains on a wheel, notwithstanding his broken limbs, and linger on in agony until death releases him some 24 hours later. A more lingering death is the lot of him who is condemned to transfixion, a form of crucifixion whereby death may not take place until two or three days have elapsed.<sup>23</sup>

De Kock maintains that these forms of punishment were imposed on "all malefactors, irrespective of race, colour, or position," and quotes in support the Court of

<sup>22</sup>Nentzel, C.F. op. cit. p. 132.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid. p. 133.

Justice's reply to General Craig's protest in 1795. The Court had defended the severity of its sentences in terms of the gravity of the offences irrespective of whether the offender was free or a slave.

However, the Court of Justice went on to assert that nevertheless we cannot but observe, with regard to slaves, that the equality of punishment ceases when they commit offences against Europeans or free persons, particularly their masters, but this distinction is not peculiar to this country; on the contrary, it is grounded upon analogy with the Criminal Law according to which the distinction of persons is one of the essentials by which the degree of punishment is measured in most civilized nations, and the distinction is specially founded upon the Imperial Laws of Roman Law, which for its exactness is not only acknowledged as law when other Laws are silent, but it is particularly recommended as such in the statutes which have been successively issued to the Dutch Indies, relative to slaves, and are observed here.<sup>24</sup>

Now the Romans considered slaves as creatures who for their hardened bodies and their rude and uncultivated habits of thought, were much more difficult to correct and to deter from evil-doing than others who, owing to better education or better customs, measured the degree of punishment by their internal sensibilities rather than by physical pain. This principle, applied to the concrete conditions of the Cape, led the Court to observe as an historical fact that many of their slaves had descended from rough and wild nations against whom deprivation of life was scarcely regarded as a punishment

---

<sup>24</sup>De Kock, V. p. 159

unless accompanied by such cruel circumstances and greatly aggravated corporal sufferings. Hence the abolition of death by torture, while it would have no adverse consequences among free people, would lead to a revolt among the slaves who would take advantage of their numerical superiority. It will be obvious here that the presence of legal provisions governing the institution of slavery, far from acting as an ameliorating factor, actually serves as a rationale for differentiating between the value of the lives of the slaves and those of their masters.

If we turn to the problem of manumission we are also forced to have reservations about the conventional idyllic view of Cape slavery which is often theoretically buttressed by the assertion that manumission was relatively easy. In fact there are two distinct but closely related issues here, namely, the significance of the frequency of manumission, and secondly, whether it is true to say that manumission was frequent at the Cape which is a slightly relative question.

Regarding the general problem of the significance of the frequency of manumission Frank Tannenbaum writes:

The frequency and ease of manumission bespeaks, even if only implicitly, a friendly attitude toward the person whose freedom is thus made possible and encouraged, just as the systematic obstruction of manumission implies a complete, if unconscious, attitude of hostility to those whose freedom is opposed or denied. And these contrasting attitudes toward manumission work themselves out in a hundred small, perhaps unnoticed, but significant details in the treatment of the Negro, both as a slave and

when freed. Either policy reveals the bent of the system, and casts ahead of itself the long-run consequence of immediate practice and attitude<sup>25</sup>

This insight has to be kept in mind in any examination of the problem of manumission and in fact an examination of the Cape situation may lead us into taking the question further back and asking under what conditions would frequency of manumission be rightly interpreted as revealing the "bent of the system".

As regards the second problem we have already shown how inconclusive the evidence in support of the contention that profession of Christianity led to manumission is. The increasing population of free blacks during the period of the rule of the Company at the Cape is usually cited as evidence of the ease with which slaves attained freedom. Now the whole discussion of this problem in the Cape context has to take cognisance of the overall economic structure of Cape society. The fact that the whole economy was functioning within a strangled market tended to act both as a fetter on production as shown in the prevalence of crises of over-production which in turn had a bearing on the labour needs of the settlers. Further, the presence of groups of Khoi Khoi meant that the settlers did not have to depend entirely on slave labour especially for duties connected with pastoralism. So we have to place the problem of manumission within a structural framework which encompasses the need for labour, the availability of alternative forms of labour, as well as the relative ease with which slaves could be obtained.

---

<sup>25</sup> Tannenbaum, Frank op. cit. p. 69

when freed. Either policy reveals the bent of the system, and casts ahead of itself the long-run consequence of immediate practice and attitude<sup>25</sup>.

This insight has to be kept in mind in any examination of the problem of manumission and in fact an examination of the Cape situation may lead us into taking the question further back and asking under what conditions would frequency of manumission be rightly interpreted as revealing the "bent of the system".

As regards the second problem we have already shown how inconclusive the evidence in support of the contention that profession of Christianity led to manumission is. The increasing population of free blacks during the period of the rule of the Company at the Cape is usually cited as evidence of the ease with which slaves attained freedom. Now the whole discussion of this problem in the Cape context has to take cognisance of the overall economic structure of Cape society. The fact that the whole economy was functioning within a strangled market tended to act both as a fetter on production as shown in the prevalence of crises of over-production which in turn had a bearing on the labour needs of the settlers. Further, the presence of groups of Khoi Khoi meant that the settlers did not have to depend entirely on slave labour especially for duties connected with pastoralism. So we have to place the problem of manumission within a structural framework which encompasses the need for labour, the availability of alternative forms of labour, as well as the relative ease with which slaves could be obtained.

---

<sup>25</sup> Tannenbaum, Frank op. cit. p. 69

When we have examined these factors it will not be surprising to discover that the principle of compulsory manumission was not unknown at the Cape in the early days. A slave who had saved the life of his master, risked his own in his defence or discovered the person responsible for his master's death, could claim freedom as his recompense without any compensation. The Government did also offer a slave freedom as a reward for the discovery of a crime. Moreover, when a female slave had issue by her own master, she could not be sold during his lifetime and at his death. Instead, she and her offspring by him were entitled to their liberty. However, this right did not extend to the case of the slave having children by the son or any other relation of the master.

There were also cases of slaves who purchased their own freedom having accumulated enough money. But the degree to which this practice was limited is shown by the fact that when Ordinance 19 which gave a slave the right of purchasing his own freedom and that of his child, wife or brother, there was a widespread outcry. The Burgher Senate refused to proclaim the Ordinance in the usual manner. It required the firmness of Lieutenant Governor General Bourke to have the law carried into execution.

In the early days of the settlement, Montzel informs us, baptism was a prelude to emancipation. Children born in slavery were to be baptized and taught the rudiments of Christianity which gave some of them the status of freemen. There is evidence that the Company, at the early stage at any rate, did carry out these regulations as regards children of slaves belonging to the State, hence there were no slave children in the service

of the Company. Clearly in this case the frequency of manumission among Company owned slaves cannot be interpreted as a sign of less harsh treatment compared with the privately owned slaves.

Further, William Wright observed that

the more respectable of the slaves, at least about Cape Town, are generally Mohammedans. The conversion of slaves to Islamism is also much encouraged by the noble regard for freedom evinced by Mohammedan proprietors, who either manumit their slaves gratuitously, or, as is stated in the guardians report, 'if the slaves profess the same faith they allow them to purchase their freedom at cost price and for that purpose often permit them to work on their own account.'<sup>26</sup>

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Hohné, the superintendent of the lodge, submitted an interesting report. According to this report the lodge contained 592 males and females of whom 74 were convicts. 36 of these slaves were incapable of doing any hard work owing to old age or physical disability. They were thus made responsible for cleaning the lodge and nursing small children. Some were in sick-beds, others were to become mothers. So much had to be done that healthy slaves could not even have Sundays off. The superintendent accordingly suggested that numbers of the older convicts should be released in order that they should join their friends, who would willingly take care of them.

---

<sup>26</sup>Wright, William Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope, p.4.

The problem of the senile slave who became a liability was no monopoly of the Company. Private owners also had to cope with this problem. It was only the more rational systems of labour exploitation that manage to combine unfreedom and no responsibility for the aged which belong to a later historical period that solved the problem once and for all. For the earlier system manumission was the easiest way out. The result in De Kock's words was that "in the course of time these unfortunate mortals became a public burden, and caused a severe drain on the relief funds in the charge of the deacons of the Reformed Church".<sup>27</sup>

About thirty years after the first importation of slaves, a note appeared in the Journal to the effect that the Council of policy had unanimously decided to manumit some male and female slaves, at their own request, as they had served well and faithfully for many years, and as they were now "old and worn out and no longer able to be of any service to the Company". As early as 1708, Commissioner Simons passed a regulation prohibiting any emancipation unless the owner had two guarantors who would stand security that the freed slave would not become a burden upon the poor funds within ten years, as laid down in the Statutes of Batavia.

The problem that faced the Cape Government was that because of the close connection between state and church, all manumitted slaves became a direct burden on the state which had to subsidize the Dutch Reformed Church. Thus in 1765 the

---

<sup>27</sup>De Kock, V. op. cit. p. 69



Cape adopted a Batavian order of 1753 compelling all owners to pay 10 rix dollars for every slave emancipated. In 1777 the sum was raised to 50 rix dollars. The monopoly-based economic structure of the Cape under the Company put a limit both to the degree of the exploitation of slave labour as well as on the amount of economic opportunities for the manumitted slave. The result was that even young former slaves were sometimes compelled to go back to the Company to ask for work. Also, there were many freed slaves who were resold because their choice was limited to either complete impoverishment or crime. Spilhaus <sup>28</sup> informs us that in 1682 emancipation was further controlled because it had become abundantly proved that individuals brought up in slavery, even of a milder sort, were too frequently unable to adjust themselves to a free society. Once control was withdrawn, they degenerated into idleness, and, if no worse, came down upon church funds.

Many freed slaves were responsible for freeing other slaves by purchasing them. Neither did emancipation always mean complete freedom. De Kock quotes the very interesting case of a certain widow who expressed her willingness to emancipate her slave boy on condition that he would always provide for her maintenance, bear the expenses of her funeral, pay for the mourning clothes, church duty and other costs.

Cases like that of Frank the Malay who purchased

---

<sup>28</sup> Spilhaus, M.V. The First South Africans and the Laws which Governed Them

his own freedom and later became a fruit dealer and fish seller, and made enough money within a few years to purchase two slaves and a boat, and furnished his home in a luxurious Malay fashion and became a man of great esteem and a great friend of such important people as Admiral Sir Roger Curtis were rather extreme exceptions to the norm and should not be allowed to obscure the plight of the manumitted slave at the Cape.

We shall not deal with the question of abolition here because its discussion belongs to a different period and is intertwined with a different set of questions related to labour and the frontier, British rule, and the missionaries. However, one question remains to be commented upon, namely, the general nature of slavery at the Cape.

On the whole, historians have tended to stress the mildness of slavery at the Cape. Evidence for this are factors like the frequency of manumission, provision of schools for slave children, masters' wills and general protective measures adopted to ensure that the plight of the chattels was bearable.

John White, <sup>29</sup> an Englishman, wrote (in 1787) of "the fatigue and toil endured by Cape slaves as by no means equalling that endured by the slaves in our own colonies... they certainly treat their slaves with great humanity and kindness." De Kock informs us that in the 17th and 18th centuries

---

<sup>29</sup>White J. quoted in De Kock p. 37.

Christian men and women showed great kindness towards their slaves, in accordance with the exhortation of the Apostle Paul: "Remember those that are in bonds, as if bound with them; and those that are cruelly treated, as being yourselves also in the body."<sup>30</sup>

Theal<sup>31</sup> sums up the position as follows: With regard to the treatment of slaves in South Africa all observers whose opinion is worthy of respect were agreed that in no other part of the world did bondage sit so lightly....All the English Governors and officials of position who reported upon the subject were agreed on this. Their statements might be condensed into a sentence used by Lord Charles Somerset in a dispatch to Earl Bathurst: "No portion of the community is better off, or happier perhaps, than the domestic slave in South Africa."

Now this is a slight exaggeration, to say the least. However, we should note that it refers specifically to the domestic slaves and that Theal's distortion is for purely ideological reasons. On the whole we need to be cautious of this conventional wisdom.

Barrow observed that

there is much diversity of treatment in this particular (food, clothing, and hours of labour) and the South African traveller may observe every possible shade of variety, from the finery of the gay and gaudy courtesan, and the respectable domestic, to the half-naked wretchedness

---

<sup>30</sup>De Kock, op. cit. p. 199

<sup>31</sup>Theal, G.N. History of South Africa Vol. II.

Of the frontier cattle-herd, which latter office is sometimes held by a female, sent, perhaps by way of punishment for some domestic fault, or through the caprice or cupidity of the former owner, from the lap of luxury in which she had been nursed in the more civilized part of the colony, to protract a life of cheerless exile. In those dreary desolate solitudes, even the master is often impelled, from his circumstances, to lead a life of wretchedness, and poverty, destitute of or perhaps unacquainted with comfort. What then must be the condition of the menial?

The same author observed that

the country slaves are ill-fed, ill-clothed, work extremely hard and are frequently punished with the greatest severity, sometimes with death, when rage gets the better of compassion.<sup>32</sup>

Sparrman's evidence supports this view.

I have known some colonists, not only in the heat of their passion, but even deliberately and in cold blood, undertake themselves the low office (fit only for the executioner) of not only flogging for a trifling neglect the back and limbs of their slaves, by a peculiar, slow, lingering method, but likewise, outdoing the very tigers in cruelty, throwing pepper and salt over the wounds; but what appeared to me most strange and horrid was to hear the colonist not only describe with great satisfaction, the whole process of his diabolical invention, but even pride himself on the practice of it, and rack his brains in order to find sophisms in defence of it as well as the slave trade...He was, however, a European by birth, of a free and civilized nation, and indeed, gave evident proofs of possessing a kind of

---

<sup>32</sup>Barrow, J. An Account of Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa vol. 2. p. 109.

tender heart, so that, perhaps, it would be difficult to show anywhere greater contradiction in the disposition of man, though in a world composed entirely of contradictions.<sup>33</sup>

What can save one from substituting an entirely platitudinous position, namely, that the experiences of the slave in the Cape varied according to his or her location and the temperament of the master, for the idyllic conventional picture of Cape slavery would be an examination of the various strategies adopted by the slaves themselves. Kenneth Stamp, <sup>34</sup> among others, has noted that 'what the slaves thought of their masters and white people generally is just as important to know but infinitely more difficult to find.' There is no easy way of overcoming this problem.

From the very beginning the problem of escapee slaves plagued the Cape officials and settlers. The presence of a Khoi Khoi population in the immediate hinterland guaranteed the runaway slave a measure of immunity. This led to frequent tension between the Khoi Khoi and the whites and in fact the first war between the two groups was partly caused by this very problem. The Government devised means to discourage escaping. As soon as a slave was supposed to have been missing for 24 hours it was the duty of all inhabitants to report this to the Governor. Further, all Company slaves, except old men and women and boys, were put into chains. Punishment for escaping was very severe.

---

<sup>33</sup> Sparrman, A. A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope, 1772-6, quoted in Wright op. cit. p. 26

<sup>34</sup> Stamp, K.M. The Peculiar Institution. Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South p. 377

There is evidence of slaves beating up their masters and burning down their lodges. Runaway slaves usually committed burglary and murder. Slaves also used the tactic of emptying sanitary tubs into the canals, and in front of settlers' houses instead of into the sea. They also made it a point to hide their medical expertise from the masters. The history of the early Cape is full of stories of groups of fugitive slaves who, sometimes accompanied by white rebels, conducted guerilla-type tactics and occupied areas altogether inaccessible to the Cape troops. There are reports to the effect that at Cape Hangklip a large number of fugitive slaves lived in comparative luxury and safety. They were not only well provided with guns, powder and lead, but they also had their own fishing boat. In view of these strategies it is no surprise that the Cape authorities prohibited the sale of any weapon no matter whatever kind to the slaves including knives. A system of slave passes was also introduced to check their movements.

The final question to which we must attend is the overall place of slavery in the history of South Africa and that of the Cape in particular. We have described the social order that existed in the early Cape as one based on the exploitation of slave labour but we must go further than this.

Genovese has made a distinction between slave societies in which the whole way of life hinged around the institution of slavery, in other words slavery penetrated every aspect of inter-personal relations and became a way of life and those societies in which, though present, slavery did not go that deep. In the latter cases abolition could

occur peacefully because it never became a class question - "a question of life and death for a whole class and therefore for a world view and notion of civilization."

We have noted the relative absence of the large scale plantation in its classical form in the Cape. Yet there is a sense in which it could be argued that slavery at the Cape did become a way of life. If we consider factors like the numerical strength of the slaves, and the relative weakness of other forms of labour, from a purely economic point of view, there is no doubt about the importance of slavery in Cape society. As Spilhaus put it "The burghers would have been the last to welcome the abolition of slavery. A habit of thought and a way of life had been formed. The possession of slaves was part of a social status."<sup>35</sup>

In fact a vindication of the Genovese thesis would argue that the so-called Great Trek was a sign of the roots which slavery as an institution had struck at the Cape. However, we need to be very cautious about reaching this rather tempting conclusion as will be shown later.

The point is that there were some limiting factors in Cape society which tended to weaken slavery as an institution. In a society based on the monopolistic principles of the Dutch East India Company the whole notion of freedom was a rather precarious one. Commissioner Verburg, after examining the state of the colony in 1672, declared that

the Dutch colonists at the Cape of Good Hope bear the name of free men. But they

---

<sup>35</sup>Spilhaus, M.V. op. cit. p. 159

are so trammelled and confined in all things, that the absence of any freedom is but too manifest. The orders and proclamations, from time to time issued, are so rigid that it would be impossible to carry out penalties therein, except with utter ruin of the burghers.<sup>36</sup>

Also, the presence of the knechts as a form of semi-free labour albeit an unreliable one, must have had an effect on the system. The same must be said regarding the presence of the Khoi Khoi as dependants of a serf-like kind. Yet as Lichtenstein observed

The Hottentot is a hired servant, and there is this great distinction between them and the slave: that the former only address the master by the title of Baas (master) while the slaves address him as Sleur (Lord)... A Hottentot in consequence takes it extremely amiss if he is addressed by the words Pay or Juge as the slaves are; he expects to be called by his name if addressed by anyone who knows it, and by those to whom it is not known he expects to be called Honot or Boy.<sup>37</sup>

It must be maintained not so much against the historians who have observed the absence of a systematic racist ideology at the Cape at this time, but certainly against the rather vague assertion that religion was the sole determinant of social position, that we here find a social order that is based on the exploitation of slave labour and that this dichotomy between free and unfree, though there are overlepping groups, is in the main buttressed by cultural, racial and other differences. To this extent it provides the basis for a social order in which race is significant and by definition cannot be defined as colourblind.

<sup>36</sup> Commissioner Verburg quoted in Watermeyer, E.B. Three Lectures on the Cape of Good Hope under the Government of the Dutch East India Company

<sup>37</sup> Lichtenstein, H. Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, quoted in De Kock, V.op. cit. p.51



are so trammelled and confined in all things, that the absence of any freedom is but too manifest. The orders and proclamations, from time to time issued, are so rigid that it would be impossible to carry out penalties therein, except with utter ruin of the burghers.<sup>36</sup>

Also, the presence of the knechts as a form of semi-free labour albeit an unreliable one, must have had an effect on the system. The same must be said regarding the presence of the Khoi Khoi as dependants of a serf-like kind. Yet as Lichtenstein observed

The Hottentot is a hired servant, and there is this great distinction between them and the slave: that the former only address the master by the title of Baas (master) while the slaves address him as S'ieur (Lord)... A Hottentot in consequence takes it extremely amiss if he is addressed by the words Pay or Juge as the slaves are; he expects to be called by his name if addressed by anyone who knows it, and by those to whom it is not known, he expects to be called Honot or Boy.<sup>37</sup>

It must be maintained not so much against the historians who have observed the absence of a systematic racist ideology at the Cape at this time, but certainly against the rather vague assertion that religion was the sole determinanet of social position, that we here find a social order that is based on the exploitation of slave labour and that this dichotomy between free and unfree, though there are overlapping groups, is in the main buttressed by cultural, racial and other differences. To this extent it provides the basis for a social order in which race is significant and by definition cannot be defined as colourblind.

<sup>36</sup> Commissioner Verburg quoted in Watermeyer, E.B. Three Lectures on the Cape of Good Hope under the Government of the Dutch East India Company

<sup>37</sup> Lichtenstein, H. Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, quoted in De Kock, V.op. cit. p.51

CHAPTER THREE  
CONFLICT AND CONQUEST - THE EASTERN FRONTIER  
 (Section A)

The problem of the significance of the frontier in the history of South Africa is a complex one. There seems to be some agreement among historians that the existence of a prolonged military conflict between black and white has had a permanent effect on the nature of inter-group relations. Thus for example De Kiewiet states that

the Union Constitution, in native policy at all events, represented the triumph of the frontier, and into the hands of the frontier was delivered the future of the native peoples. It was the conviction of the frontier that the foundations of society were race and the privileges of race.<sup>1</sup>

This point of view seems to be shared by most writers on South Africa. More recently Tiryakian has shown how Calvinism underwent transformation into a racist ideology under frontier conditions.<sup>2</sup>

Yet just what the implications of the whole assumption about the frontier are has remained obscure. Besides a factual account of the wars fought and the number of cattle captured, very little has been said about the frontier as a distinct social order. There has been no Turner<sup>3</sup>- type

---

<sup>1</sup> De Kiewiet, C. W. A History of South Africa. Social and Economic pp. 150-151

<sup>2</sup> Tiryakian, E. 'Apartheid and Religion' in Theology Today. Vol. 14, pp. 385-400.

<sup>3</sup> Turner, F. J. The Frontier in American History.

discussion about the South African frontier as either a democratizing force or otherwise. Most writings on the Boer expansion tend to be of a romantic nature and have found it convenient to concentrate on the great Afrikaner myth, namely, the Great Trek. Even historians who concentrate on social structure like De Kiewiet seem to use the concept of the frontier in an almost omnibus fashion to refer to every area of competition for a scarce resource as the following quote shows:

In 1936 more than 89,000 natives from Portuguese territories were employed in the mines of a total of over 340,000. The great use of native labour by the mines became a social and economic problem of the first magnitude. It was the new race frontier of the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup>

While there may be some justification for using the concept frontier to depict a conflict situation that arises out of competition for limited resources caution is necessary if its usefulness as a heuristic device is to be maintained. For instance, forms of labour exploitation in a mine-based economy are likely to be different from those found in an agrarian economic order. In fact though it is true to say that both situations have in common factors like scarcity of resources and involve different racial groups, on closer examination it becomes clear that competition for jobs in the mines is only limited to two groups, namely, the white worker and the black worker, and that a section of the white population, namely, the mine-owners exploit the conflict for their own purposes. In other words the conflict does not involve the whole question of group (defined as race) survival.

---

<sup>4</sup>

De Kiewiet op. cit. p. 165

67.

Further, whereas the interaction on the rural frontier centers around the subjugation and dispossession of one group by another, and the problem of establishing rational-legal domination, the mining frontier presupposes this very domination.

In other words, the colonial mining enterprise belongs to the category which Malinowski calls the third column institution<sup>5</sup> whereas the concept frontier should refer to a social situation in which two or more groups with varying military strength, culture, and race struggle for dominance through dispossession by peaceful or violent means to establish group (or race) hegemony rather than a narrowly class one.

The other usage of the concept of the frontier which De Kiewiet employs is better forgotten in order to avoid confusion. He writes:

The rise of gold-mining in South Africa was like the rise of the same industry among the original Mexican settlers of California. It brought confusion to an unprogressive rural society. The frontier of capital and industry did not follow the cattle frontier of the Great Trek gradually, mixing with it slowly, and finally forming another society by the fusion of the old and the new. Instead this frontier of money and machinery leapt into the Boer midst, bringing with it an aggressive and incompatible population.<sup>6</sup>

Of course this is a brilliant insight in so far as it points out the very important fact that what later became the basis of a capitalist take-off in South Africa was a purely fortuitous factor which arose rather exogenously, and had very little to do with the backward rural order except that it inherited some of its worst features. However, this should not obscure the

---

<sup>5</sup> Malinowski, B. The Dynamics of Culture Change.

<sup>6</sup> De Kiewiet op. cit. p. 120.

fact that our author is now talking about a different way of life, namely, capitalism invading a semi-feudal ox-wagon colonial economy, which raises different theoretical issues.

Elsewhere, writings on the frontier have been more systematic though no less romantic. For instance in the United States a whole discussion was provoked by Frederick Jackson Turner's work The Frontier in American History (1893). We shall take a brief look at Turner's hypotheses and structures even though most of them have been refuted, because he raises some interesting questions that are relevant to our problem.

Turner begins by noting that American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West. "The existence of an area of free land its continuous recession and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development."<sup>7</sup> He then notes a return to primitive conditions under specific frontier conditions.

At the Atlantic frontier one can study the germs of processes repeated at each successive frontier. We have the complex European life sharply precipitated by the wilderness into the simplicity of primitive conditions. The first frontier had to meet its Indian question, its question of the disposition of the public domain, of the means of intercourse with older settlements, of the extension of political organization, of religious and educational activity. And the settlement of these and similar questions for one frontier served as a guide for the next.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Turner op. cit. quoted in Taylor, G. K. The Turner Thesis concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History (Problems in American Civilization) p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

However, there are differences between various frontier situations, for instance, the farming frontier differs from the mining frontier.

The situation is also complicated by the presence of European groups of different nationalities. The English farmers met Indians armed with guns. The trading frontier (mainly French fur hunters), while steadily undermining Indian power by making the Indians ultimately dependent on the whites, gave them an increased power of resistance by selling them guns. On the other hand, the presence of a common enemy had a unifying effect on the settler communities, hence "particularism was strongest in colonies with no Indian frontier." Also,

It is evident that the unifying tendencies of the revolutionary period were facilitated by the previous cooperations in the regulation of the frontier. In this connection may be mentioned the importance of the frontier, from that day to this, as a military training school, keeping alive the power of resistance to aggression, and developing the stalwart and rugged qualities of the frontiersmen.<sup>9</sup>

Closely connected with this frontier solidarity is the notion of the frontier as a rural melting pot. "In the crucible of the frontier the immigrants were Americanized, liberated, and fused into a mixed race, English in neither nationality nor characteristics." This solidarity has both democratic and anarchistic aspects.

But the most important effect of the frontier has been in the promotion of democracy here and in Europe. As has been indicated, the frontier is productive of individualism. Complex society is precipitated by the wilderness into

---

<sup>9</sup>

Ibid. p. 7.

a kind of primitive organization based on the family. The tendency is anti-social. It produces antipathy to control, and particularly to any direct control. The tax gatherer is viewed as a representative of oppression.<sup>10</sup>

Turner's thesis has been attacked on almost all fronts. Pierson,<sup>11</sup> for instance, dismisses it as some form of geographic or environmental determinism. We are not here concerned with a critique of Turner and his frontier democracy. However, that the outcome of the confrontation between groups of different military power and technological development, modes of economic organization, culture and race will bear permanent marks which will distinguish it from any other social order seems to us quite basic. From this perspective the most interesting critique of Turner's theory would not begin by dismissing the problem but would break the theory down into a set of hypotheses and examine them critically with the view to testing each one of them in various situations. Something akin to this procedure has been followed by Louis Hacker who acknowledges that Turner was right in pointing out the significance of free lands in the course of the development of American society and goes on to point out that:

The free lands of the West were not important, however, because they made possible the creation of a unique 'American spirit' - that indefinable something that was to set the United States apart from European experiences for all time - but because their quick settlement and utilization for the extensive cultivation of foodstuffs furnished exactly those commodities with which the United States, as a debtor nation, could balance its international payments and borrow European capital in order to

---

<sup>10</sup>

Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>11</sup>Pierson, G. W. 'The Frontier and American Institutions: A criticism of the Turner Theory,' New England Quarterly, 15 June 1942, pp. 224-255.

develop a native industrial enterprise ...  
 In the second place, the presence of the frontier helps to explain the failure of American labour to preserve a continuous revolutionary tradition: class lines could not become fixed as long as the free lands existed to drain off the most spirited elements in the working and the lower middle class populations - not only as farmers, but as small merchants and enterprisers, too - and to prevent the creation of a labour reserve for the purpose of thwarting the demands of organized workers.<sup>12</sup>

It will be evident from the summary which we have presented that Turner is concerned with the Indians only in so far as they present a problem for the settlers. In other words, the Indian is viewed as part of the environment of the farmers. Any conceptualization of a frontier situation in these terms will by definition be inadequate no matter how informed it is. Now this kind of ethnocentricity is an almost universal feature of studies of colonialism. While it is understandable that a lot of attention should be given to the group which by virtue of its military superiority assumes hegemony, it is not correct to assume that all colonial history is the history of the colonizing white settlers, except for purely ideological reasons. In point of fact, one of the most important factors in determining the kind of social order that emerges out of conquest situations is not only the strength in military terms but the nature of the whole mode of social organization of the indigenous population.

It is the central theme of this Chapter that the encounter between the settlers and the African peoples

---

12

Hacker, L. M. 'Sections or Classes?' in Nation, 137 (July 26, 1933) pp. 109-110



125

whose socio-economic mode of organization was based not only on cattle rearing but also agriculture provided the basis of a social order based on distinction between groups on racial lines. In locating the roots of South African white racism in the frontier confrontations of the late 18th and the major part of the 19th century there are two theses with which we have to deal even if indirectly. The first one is the connection between slavery as a means of labour exploitation and the South African pattern of race domination. As far as we know this thesis has not been systematically expounded in the South African context. Our position is that the existence of slavery as the chief means of labour exploitation is an important contributory factor in the formation of a society in which race is an important factor in structuring inter-group relations. However, the mere existence of slavery did not automatically lead to the peculiar pattern of race relations situation in which practically all the institutions are geared towards the perpetuation of a pattern of rigid racial regimentation. In other words, it is conceivable that without the confrontations with the Zulus, Sothos, and Xhosas a pattern of race relations more akin to the Iberian variant would have developed in South Africa even though all the legal and religious factors which are normally regarded as the pre-requisites for such an order were absent at the Cape.

The second thesis relates to the causal connection (as distinct from structural compatibility) between capitalism as a mode of production and racism as an ideology of domination. In its crudest form this line of argument presents itself in the form of a very simple economic reductionism which asserts that where ever there is capitalism

there will be groups that will be the most brutally exploited and the capitalists will use the presence of such groups to prevent the emergence of proper revolutionary consciousness among the working class. We shall have to postpone a detailed discussion of this thesis in all its forms to a later stage. More immediately, we may note that the social order which emerged before the gold boom, based, as it was, on agriculture and marked by an almost complete absence of wage labour and hence more akin to feudalism than capitalism was the seedbed of the racially stratified society. The development of capitalism from feudalism in Europe is littered with cases of the merging of groups, namely, former slaves, free peasants, and serfs. In the Cape itself the Khoi Khoi merged with the former slaves to form the so-called Cape Coloureds. Now the emergence of the poor whites in South Africa as a distinct group whose class position put them on the same level with the blacks cannot be accounted for adequately by the capitalism/racism thesis. In our view the existence of a semi-feudal colonial order shaped the very nature of South African industrial capitalism.

To maintain that the social order based on dispossession by conquest shaped the very nature of South African industrial capitalism is to imply that the version of capitalist society that we encounter in modern South Africa is not European capitalism with enclaves of irrational features (which results in the polity versus economy contradiction thesis) but that not only are the economy and polity soundly compatible, but also that no logic of industrialism can make it identical with any other industrialized order. Secondly, it is to argue that the colonizer/colonized

relationship which is at one and the same time a political and an economic relationship precedes, and in turn shapes, and is at the same time shaped by, the capitalist/worker or employer/employee relationship. In less obscure language South African industrial capitalism developed within the framework of what were essentially colonial inter-group relations with the result that the class structure that emerged was in fact skewed in a certain direction by this factor.

To be able to understand the frontier confrontation fully, it is necessary to analyse the social structure of the various groups involved. We have referred to the conflict as one of cultures, races etc. but it is necessary to point out that these factors impinge and exacerbate a conflict which is essentially economic and has a strong political dimension via the military solution. What interlocks the groups in violent conflict is struggle over land. The importance of land to groups whose social organization rests on a pastoral and agricultural economic base cannot be overemphasized. If we consider the fact that the whole question of the shifting settler frontier centered around the settlers' desire for land as Neumark<sup>13</sup> has shown, it will be obvious why the struggle had a life or death nature. On the side of the Africans the importance of land is summed up by Sandile's observation that "the patrimony of a chief is land and men".

On the other hand, the importance of land to both groups should not be allowed to obscure the very important differences between the two groups. In fact it is

---

13

Neumark, S. D. Economic Influences on the South African Frontier, 1652-1836

a fallacy to represent the confrontation simply as a struggle between two sets of pastoralists as some writers have done. To do so is to obscure the most significant aspect of the conflict. As Neumark has pointed out:

The observation is sometimes made that in some respect the pastoral economy of the frontier Boers was similar to that of the Bantu tribes. Both Boer and Bantu were preoccupied with cattle breeding and the search for pastures. From this it has been concluded that the economy of the frontier Boers had been both primitive and self-sufficient. Such a conclusion is both incorrect and misleading. As to the Boers, it must be pointed out that they had never severed their economic intercourse with the outside world, and the cattle and sheep they bred were mostly intended for the market. It is true that the frontier farmers seldom raised cash crops, but it must not be overlooked that they always bred 'cash livestock'<sup>14</sup>

The above observation, namely, that the frontier Boers did produce for the market raises problems for our characterization of the frontier economy as in a way pre-capitalist and closer to colonial feudalism than capitalism. To disentangle this problem we would have to establish the various degrees of involvement in the market which various groups had at various times in South Africa and of course the nature of the Cape market which seems to have had its own peculiarities. It would be interesting, for instance to know how far the inhabitants of the Boer Republics were involved in a market economy. Even if the question of involvement in market operations is answered positively, the problem still remains as to whether one can characterise a mode of production as capitalist solely because of the factor of market exchange. Surely at this point we are faced with the problem that has baffled economic historians and others as to the most viable definition of capitalism. The presence of market exchange

766

operations is very important because it shows that this apparently backward frontier economy was in fact connected with the outside world in a satellite-like fashion in Gunder Frank's terms. However, this does not settle the question as to whether the frontier way of life can be characterized as capitalist because if a man sells butter and hides in exchange for guns and materials for making wagons, his way of life may still be characterized as one dominated by the sustenance factor. We shall have to return to this problem at a later stage.

Perhaps the most interesting aspects of the frontier situation lie not in differences in the economic systems of the groups but in those areas to which the concept of cultural pluralism directs our attention. If we consider the rabid individualism of the frontier Boers with their anarchistic solidarity developed during their long struggle against the Company bureaucrats (in their struggle for an open market) on the one hand, and against the Khoi Khoi and the San on the other, in contrast to the whole mode of social organization amongst the African groups centering around the institution of chieftainship and extended kinship ties, it becomes clear what a complex task it would be to try and determine the groups' views of their opponents. Perhaps it is only at this very early stage that the search for a 'dual society' can be fruitful if one can establish that there was a society at that stage. Also, we must note that there were already black people who were part and parcel of the white side of the frontier either as slaves or semi-serfs, anyway unfree people though euphemistically referred to as 'free persons of colour'. Thus while we are trying to establish the

specific problems which the expanding white settlement had to face at this particular stage, it is important not to overlook the continuity of the whole process.

First reports of contact between the Xhosas and the Boers go back to 1702 when a cattle-plundering expedition from Stellenbosch, consisting of forty-five Europeans and a number of Khoi Khoi, left for the eastern parts of the interior. This first contact was rather ominous because we are informed that they "fell afoul of Bantu tribesmen in the neighbourhood of the Fish River". Apparently, the raiders then attacked the Khoi Khoi of that region and drove off with their cattle, and committed other acts of violence against them. Trade between the Xhosas and the colonists went on somewhat intermittently throughout the eighteenth century. In 1768 a commission appointed by the Cape government to define the boundaries of the colony not only found the road from the district of Swellendam leading "eastwards to the abode of the Kaffirs", but they were also told of a narrower road running the same way. Apparently this road was used by 'hawkers' using horses and horse carts instead of ox wagons. The Company also obtained "a great number of cattle, fit for slaughter, in exchange for tobacco, brandy, glass-beads and bits of iron" (before 1774).

Permanent face to face contact is a feature of the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Cory<sup>15</sup> describes the scattered white population of the eastern districts in 1878 as a very heterogeneous one consisting of those who found themselves there in consequence of eastward migration resulting

---

<sup>15</sup>

Cory, G. M. The Rise of South Africa, Vol. II.

from the desire of their forebears to escape from the unjust and irritating rule of the Company plus various new arrivals of various European nationalities. As Lichtenstein points out if a soldier who had served out his time, or a European who had not talent sufficient to get his bread in Cape Town, wished to establish himself as a colonist, this was the part of the country to which all such were sent.<sup>16</sup>

It is important to understand that the attitudes of the Cape officials to the settlements in the eastern districts were governed by their own selfish interests. Cory<sup>17</sup> informs us that: The new district (Graff-Keinet) could but be of little value to the Company; it was therefore to be maintained at as little cost as possible. With the view to making it self-supporting, a tax of 1s. 4d. on every 100 sheep and 1d. on every head of cattle was levied. The greatest expense anticipated was that of protecting the district against native inroads. The strictest orders were issued forbidding the farmers to barter for cattle or have any other dealings with them. With the feeble organization and no power to enforce the penalties, forbidden traffic continued and many kaffirs were in the service of the farmers as herds. This latter proceeding was felt dangerous, for a rupture between master and servant might lead to trouble with the whole tribe to which the native belonged. Comparative prosperity and quiet led the farmers to resume cattle breeding and the production of such commodities as butter and soap. These every now and then were transported to Cape Town where they

---

<sup>16</sup> Lichtenstein, H. Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803-1806

<sup>17</sup> Cory op. cit.

found a ready market. All this, however, was a calm which betokened an impending storm. Suddenly Cungwa and Langa crossed the Fish River early in 1789 with hundreds of their followers. Farming operations came to an end.

The above extract sums up the problem of frontier existence from the point of view of the settler. Now to argue that the presence of the Khosas across the border and some within it, presented no new problems for the settlers because it was a continuation of a process of conquest which had started with the Khoi Khoi is to turn one's attention from the most significant aspect of the conflict. The dispossession of herdsmen presents problems which are different to those which are thrown up by an encounter with settled agriculturalists. Once pastoralists are deprived of their cattle, to some extent, resources are closed to them even though there may still be free land available. On the other hand, to reduce groups which practise agriculture to a state of dependence it is necessary that not only should they be deprived of their cattle but also that subsistence agriculture be crippled.

The settler response to this situation was of course to strengthen that peculiarly frontier institution of defence, namely, the commando. While the commando as an institution can be regarded as the embodiment of notions about the sacredness of group survival, in the Cape it also had a strong anarchistic dimension. Colonel Collins observed that from this moment the authority of the Government began to decline in the eastern districts, the inhabitants conceiving that, as it had no power to protect, it was unable to punish. According to him, some evil disposed persons at the Cape, as



well as in the country. took advantage of these circumstances to propagate revolutionary principles, and Graff-Reinet became the theatre of anarchy and revolt. So here we see how the problems arising from the presence of a formidable enemy across the border have repercussions on the relations between the settlers and the officials. Problems relating to market opportunities, taxation etc. combine with the whole problem of frontier security to form a highly explosive situation.

Another interesting feature of this situation is to observe the way in which ideas derived from the French Revolution were adopted at the Cape and thereby distorted to suit the specifically frontier conditions in the eastern districts. Cory<sup>18</sup> informs us that: In South Africa the political condition of all except the privileged officials of the Company was comparable with those of the lower classes in France and Holland. Knowledge of what was taking place in Europe made itself felt in the colony, being disseminated by deserters from the Company's service, discharged soldiers and other adventurerers who gradually mixed with the community ... It is therefore a matter of little surprise that the greater part of South African colonists were 'patriots', or, as General Craig described them, infected with the rankest poison of Jacobinism. In the more isolated and distant parts, such as Graff-Reinet, public opinion, easily swayed by a few popular leaders was at the mercy of those who introduced the new ideas which, in conjunction with the ignorance and credulity of the farmers thus cut off from civilization, gave

---

18

Ibid.

birth to the most absurd ideas with respect to their strength and importance. In imitation of the French procedure, the handful of people in Graff-Reinet formed the 'National Assembly', while in Swellendam the 'National Convention of the colony of Swellendam' came to existence.

The struggles against the Company officials and later against the British served to shape the nature of group consciousness among the settlers. How this group consciousness operates is not restricted to these specific struggles but forms part of a world view which serves as the most ready mechanism for interpreting the world. Thus when the settlers began to talk about the 'voice of the people' and similar concepts which were in essence revolutionary, there was embodied in them in embryonic form traces of 'volk' ideas (defined as a blood group with its own gheist) which are extremely compatible with racist ideology.

Rather than follow developments on the frontier in any chronological order the rest of this Chapter will be devoted to the specific conjuncture of a society in crisis with the Xhosas, British political dominance, and the presence of missionaries as part of the frontier setting with the view to showing how lines came to be drawn on racial rather than any other lines resulting in a peculiar form of racial stratification.

The colonial society which encountered the might of the Xhosas towards the end of the eighteenth century was riddled with conflict. Balandier<sup>19</sup> has noted that a number of works on colonial societies have insisted on

---

<sup>19</sup> Balandier G. The Sociology of Black Africa, Chap. 1.

the state of crisis which most colonized societies reveal. This is present to the extent that the dominant minority is opposed to real solutions. Such crises call into question the quasi-totality of society, the institutions as well as groups and social symbols. Accordingly, maladjustments constitute good analytical starting points which allow one not only to understand phenomena of contact between the dominant and the dependent society but also better to understand the latter in its traditional forms, by making manifest certain characteristic weaknesses or certain irreducible structures and collective representations.

What interests us in Balandier's insight is the methodological point about maladjustments as good starting points. What threatened the social order which had developed in the Cape by the end of the eighteenth century was not so much the conflict between the colonizer and the colonized though it will be shown later that the presence of the Xhosas across the border affected Khoi Khoi revolutionary consciousness. The principal aspect of the conflict lay in the fact that the whole social order had been based on a contradiction. This was embodied in the principle of the Dutch East India Company being, as it was, a trading company founded and thriving on the principle of monopoly, attempting to undertake colonization by establishing a free settler community. This is the central contradiction that runs through the whole history of the Company's rule in the Cape. Hence any analysis of Cape society at this stage in terms of the nature of the ruling class (as proposed by Genovese) has to come to terms with this bifurcation of the dominant white section into these two antagonistic groups namely, officials and settlers.

The following quote from Fouche's The Dairy of Adam Tas expresses this conflict very well:

On the other hand, the officials felt no affection for the colonists as such. As a rule they regarded the settlers as interlopers who, if not representing an element directly prejudicial to the Company, were at all events in the officials' way and appropriated whatever small profits would otherwise have fallen to the latter. Almost immediately after the settlement of the first colonists at the Cape, there sprang up amongst them a feeling of suspicion as regards the officials. The officials for their part watched with jealous eyes the farming operations of the settlers. So, soon as they attempted something of the kind themselves, they came into collision with their rivals, who at once complained to the authorities. In the seventeenth century this had repeatedly occurred. And gradually there had grown up between the two classes a somewhat strong class antagonism. The officials styled themselves the Company's 'legitimate children' while the colonists were 'illegitimate', bastards without legal rights.<sup>20</sup>

So in grappling with the class structure of this early society we cannot simply talk about a dominant white minority. True, the whole society was based on the exploitation of slave and Khoi Khoi labour but this fact alone does not make the free white society devoid of antagonistic interests. Already at this stage we find that access to political power acted to the advantage of the officials who thus formed a private monopoly inside the state monopoly. This conflict which had developed in Van Riebeeck's time with the farmers asserting that they were not prepared to be the Company's slaves, served not only to shape class consciousness among the settlers but, together with Calvinism, acted as a catalyst for integrating settler groups of various nationalities into a single unit.

---

<sup>20</sup>

Fouche, L. The Dairy of Adam Tas. p. 193

However, this should not be taken to mean that there were no differences within the settler community itself. Idenburg, for instance, informs us that:

In Cape Town and the surrounding districts in the later half of the eighteenth century many lived in conditions of luxury which it would be hard to justify. Further away, however, nomadic farmers usually lived in scantily furnished houses of rough clay and mud, and even often enough in straw huts or in an ox cart in which they moved from place to place.<sup>21</sup>

The explosive political climate which gripped Cape society towards the end of the eighteenth century was a result of a long drawn struggle for a free market by the colonists. The struggle had been mainly an economic one from the very beginning though with some political undertones since the officials were using their political power to maintain a position of economic dominance through a closed market. However, towards the end of the century the whole struggle assumed a distinctly political nature. This was due in part to political developments abroad. In 1779 a burgher meeting was summoned secretly at Cape Town and four men were empowered to go to Amsterdam as representatives of the Cape burghers to express their grievances to the Council of Seventeen.

These 'patriots' were drawn almost entirely from the west. Four hundred of the three thousand free men of the colony signed a petition, all of them living within a day's ride of Cape Town. The patriots demanded that the laws be written down; a share in the making and in the administering and interpreting the same. They also demanded seven

---

<sup>21</sup>

Idenburg, P. J. The Cape of Good Hope at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century, p. 18

seats in the Council of Policy when matters affecting the burghers were being discussed. Two of these seats were to be vacated annually and filled by men nominated by the burgher councillors and approved by the Governor. Also, the burgher councillors as a body were to have the right to report to the Seventeen on the state of the colony. They also demanded half the seats in the High Court and the right of appeal to Amsterdam instead of Batavia.

Other grievances included relief from attendance at the matrimonial court; a fixed scale of official fees; reduction of farm rents; higher wine prices; more churches in the hinterland; liberty to flog slaves without reference to the Fiscal; leave to send cargoes to the Netherlands; free trade with the Indies and freedom to trade in slaves; an end to the keeping of shops or any other form of business by freed Chinese and Japanese prisoners; an end to the right of foreigners to live at the Cape or to buy or hire houses, or to run a 'burgher trade' or to ride inland or to become burghers unless they had first been in Company service.

We may note that besides the stringent restrictions placed on foreigners in general, only the grievances relating to the flogging of slaves and trade by Chinese and Japanese had any direct bearing on intergroup relations. The latter also had very strong economic roots since the Chinese and Japanese were believed to have access to stolen goods through the slaves. This provides a striking contrast to the frontier situation where the issue of the relations between the Africans and Khoi Khoi and the Boers

became one of the central problems. On the whole, these demands were not granted by the Seventeen. Effective political control still rested with the Company officials. We now have to determine whether under British rule there were any meaningful changes.

When the British first occupied the Cape in 1795 there were resident there at that time 16,000 Europeans, 17,000 slaves and an indeterminate number of Khoi Khoi and San. Some of the higher Dutch officials retained their posts. Colonists throughout supplied the rank and file of the civil service, but the higher posts were filled, as occasion offered, with Englishmen. Very few changes in the law were made. The Commission of the High Court was replaced by a burgher senate of six selected by the Governor from a fourfold list presented by the board as vacancies occurred. The torturing of slaves and Khoi Khoi on suspicion, and the breaking on the wheel and other savage forms of Cape punishment were abolished. The Governor and Lieutenant-Governor took the place of the Court of Batavia as the court of civil appeal. A Vice-Admiralty Court, independent of the colonial Government, was also established. The High Court was cut down from 13 members to 8, and all judges were paid. The civil powers of the landdrosts were extended especially in Graaff-Reinet.

In terms of the Capitulation all monopolies were cancelled, restrictions on the sale of goods to the ships and on internal trade were swept away. Coastal trade was permitted even eastward into the sphere of the English East India Company, and goods from any part of the British dominions were admitted duty-free.

Most of the reforms that were made by the British affected mainly the Western districts. Like the company, the British hardly had any frontier policy. Walker describes the state of the various ethnic groups in the Cape at this time as follows:

... In the Northeastern districts Bushmen were sometimes serving as cattle-herds; but as a rule they were still being shot or chased away, except in the parts around Tarka, where they were numerous enough to make scattered farmers withdraw. The Hottentots presented a less dangerous but more complicated problem. Of recent years, they had been recognized as humble dependents of European society. Children of slave fathers and Hottentot mothers had been specially provided for as serfs of the owners of slaves; field commandants and veldwachmeesters had been ordered to make a return to the land-drosts of all Hottentots to check the practice of runaway slaves passing themselves off as Hottentots, for already it was difficult to distinguish one class of coloured man from another ... Bastards who were not in the service of the colonists had to enrol, make opgaaf and pay taxes like ordinary burghers. Nevertheless the pure-blooded Hottentots were still regarded as free men living in the colony but not of it.<sup>22</sup>

The Khoi Khoi's traditional system of social organization was now in a state of decay. Dispossessed of their cattle and land most were either vagrants or miserably paid or unpaid farm labourers. Such organized groups as there were were leaving the colony. The Koranas were seeking refuge round the junction of the Vaal and Harts rivers; the so-called Bastards and Griquas were either holding on with Adam Kok I at the Lower Orange or following his son Cornelius to the middle Orange valley, the Namaquas were drifting northwards into South West Africa. "The Orange



River valley to the northward of the colony thus swarmed with half-breeds, Hottentots, runaway slaves and outlaws, a menace to the border farmers." We shall see later how the supposedly docile Khoi Khoi formed alliances with the Xhosas against the settlers.

We must now turn to what is easily the most interesting aspect in the new situation, namely, the presence of missionaries at the Cape. The presence of European missionaries in Southern Africa dates back to 1560 when Father Guzalo de Silviera landed at Sofala as emissary of the Society of Jesus founded in 1540 by Loyola. In Chapter Two we noted how Church and State were closely intertwined at the Cape and how the actions of the Company and the settlers were always rationalized in terms of God's will to the point where the Company was an expression of God's purpose. This phenomenon had historical roots in the long war which ended in the Treaty of Munster in 1648. So Dutch patriotism and religion became inseparable twins.

Besides occasional short visits to the Cape by missionaries, George Schmidt was the first missionary to be sent by the Moravians with the approval of the Dutch Reformed Church of Amsterdam to work among the Khoi Khoi. He arrived at the Cape in 1737. A look at his method of work gives us an idea of the difficulties he encountered:

Every evening I visited the Hottentots, sat down among them, distributed tobacco, and began to smoke with them. I told them that, moved by sincere love, I had come to make them acquainted with their Saviour, and to assist them to work. Upon this Afrika (one of the two

Hottentots who had accompanied Schmidt from Cape Town) replied: "That is a good Baas." I asked them if they knew that there was a great Baas, who had given them their cattle and all they possessed. "Yes" answered Afrika. "What do you call him?" "We call him Tuiqua," was the reply. Thereupon I rejoined: "Oh, dear people, this Tuiqua is our Saviour. He became man, and for us He died upon the Cross."<sup>23</sup>

Besides the ethnocentric opportunism which reinterprets every religious system in its own terms, what is most striking about Schmidt's procedure is how the whole question of religion becomes intertwined with questions of race. God is referred to as the great 'Baas', the white man who is the lesser 'Baas' occupies a status position next to God as it were. It is in such factors that the roots of the internalization of ideas about racial inferiority and superiority are to be found. Read, another missionary wrote in 1851 that "the Hottentots are prone to despise their own countrymen" and that he had often heard Hottentots say: "I won't allow another Hottentot to say anything to me." Marais<sup>24</sup> informs us that "the Rehoboth burgher has pride in his white blood which makes him glory in the fact that he is 'not a native but a Bastard'. As such he holds himself excused from 'Kaffir work', which may easily be stretched to include all labour with the hands." It is not surprising that in a society in which blackness is associated with slavery and serfdom and whiteness with freedom and power that there will be a measure of internalization of the dominant group's ideology. The point we are making is that the missionary intervention served to

---

<sup>23</sup>

Du Plessis, J. A History of Christian Missions in South Africa, pp. 53-54.

<sup>24</sup>

Marais, J. A. The Cape Coloured People; pp. 105-106.

reinforce this ideology by reifying relations between races.

Schmidt left the Cape in 1743 having worked for six years among the Khoi Khoi. For nearly half a century after his departure no further missionary work was done. It was Moravians again who took the field towards the end of the century, on the eve of the great missionary drive. Leave was again obtained from the Council of Seventeen, and in 1792 three Moravian missionaries arrived at Baviaans Kloof. Some 200 Khoi Khoi still lived there. However, they now had much less cattle and some had been working for the Boers hence they could all speak Dutch.

At this very early stage we find evidence of bitter hostility by the Boers to the mission station (Theal's assertions to the contrary notwithstanding). In the words of the Brethrer: "With negligible exceptions the whole white community anathematised the missionaries and all their Labours, and aimed with increasing determination at their destruction." Lady Anne Barnard was informed by the missionaries in 1798 that "over and over again the farmers have made plots to murder us. The last plot, which was to shoot us with poisoned arrows, we discovered and were able to prevent."<sup>25</sup>

The roots of this hostility were many. There was the obvious question of labour supply which was very important to the Boers. Further, Marais<sup>26</sup> informs us that the Boers in general also resented the fact that European missionaries should come among the Hottentots and treat them as friends and fellows. Their racial pride rebelled against

---

<sup>25</sup>

Du Plessis, J. Op. cit p. 76

<sup>26</sup>

Marais, J. S. Op. cit.

such an attitude: to them the term 'Christian' meant European. They resented the attempts of the missionaries to educate the Hottentots while their own children were growing up in ignorance, neglected by both church and State. It seems to us that though there may have been a lot of reasons for this hostility, the question of labour was the most decisive one.

Now the location of Baviaans Kloof happened to be in Swellendam which was the district which became a 'theatre of anarchy'. During 1795, the year of the revolt, the Swellendam 'Nationals' began to talk quite openly about the destruction of the station. The missionaries responded to this by sending the Swellendam Khoi khoi back to the farms from which they had come in order to appease the Boers and relieve the chronic labour shortage. Though the missionaries did flee in a panic to Cape Town there is enough evidence to suggest that there were shifts in the attitudes of the settlers towards these institutions according to whether they absorbed all their potential labour or not.

Though it is true that these missionary stations could not be economically self-sufficient hence: "From time to time the Hottentots would leave the station for prolonged periods, in order to enter the service of the farmers as herdsmen, wood-cutters and wagon-drivers, or even the service of the Government as soldiers;" the missionaries were not favourably disposed to these long absences "as they feared that in many cases there would be rapid moral retrogression among the men who were removed from their supervision and discipline for so many months at a time."<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup>

Du Plessis, J. op. cit pp. 85 & 90.

In the frontier districts the problem of Khoi Khoi labour assumed a more serious nature for two reasons. Firstly, because the farmers there were generally less well off. Secondly, as van Reenen observed: On these (frontier) farms slaves cannot be used on the account of the proximity to the Kafirs; often they desert, taking with them the arms with which they have been supplied for the protection of the livestock entrusted to their care, and they join the Kafirs, from whom they cannot be recovered again. The Hottentots are faithful, are good shots, and the farmer has nothing to fear from them. The slaves on these distant farms, on the contrary, often assassinate and rob their masters; of this more than one sad example is at hand. In Kafirland they enjoy the same privileges as the Kafirs and moreover the loss of a slave means a loss of from 500 to 600 Rds. to the poor farmer.

The whole discussion about missionary activity in the Cape has been on an extremely polemical level. Most right-wing South African historians present the activities of the missionaries, especially Philip, as reflecting a total one-sided commitment to the cause of the blacks against the settlers. So Philip's name is associated with 'nigger-loving', conspiracy and malice against the frontier whites. It has been left to MacMillan, a distinguished liberal historian to undertake putting the whole discussion in proper perspective and thereby exonerate if not rehabilitate Philip. The whole discussion has centered around the figure of Philip to such an extent that one tends to forget that he was just one member of one Society albeit the most controversial one.

While most of the evidence MacMillan produces for his case is extremely interesting, it is fair to say that

his overall approach to the problem gives a rather distorted picture of the missionary impact and the significance of some of the reforms that they pressed for in the first half of the last century. The whole controversy centers around the notion of the 'liberal' Cape versus the 'oppressive South African tradition' thesis.

MacMillan accounts for this difference as follows:

In the years when, by extending the area of contact between the races the Great Trek set in train the events that have produced the perplexing Bantu problem of today, a first colour question was being worked out in the Cape; and the truth is that whereas for the slaves and the Hottentots the missionaries got at least some of their policy carried through, on the other hand the colonists did have their own way with the Bantu. The result is that while the coloured people now present little difficulty, the native tribes are so congested in their 'Reserves' or so completely landless to be reduced to a state parlously like that of the Hottentots a century ago.<sup>28</sup>

We cannot enter the discussion in the historians' terms. However, by its very nature, the discussion raises extremely pertinent sociological questions and operates with certain assumptions which though not made quite explicit amount to the following:

1. That we can assume that there was a qualitative distinction between the liberal Cape and the South African tradition as two distinct social orders.
2. That the present race problem can be traced back to the oppressive South African tradition.
3. That the missionary intervention was the crucial factor in solving the colour question in the Cape.
4. A corollary to the above three assumptions is an explanation of the Great Trek in terms of the Boers

abscinding from a new order, supposedly liberal.

Now a few problems arise in locating the exact periods about which our author is talking. Surely he is not talking about the liberal Cape in the sense in which we noted the absence of a systematised racist ideology in early Cape Town. Neither is he saying that the social order which was based on slave-labour and Khoi Khoi serfdom was liberal. We must assume that according to his view the missionaries solved a colour problem that had been caused by slavery and conquest and thus ushered in a new order which resulted in the Great Trek. We notice in passing that the Great Trek is seen as evidence of the new order while the new order thesis is used as an explanation for the Great Trek.

The first question is of course what Macmillan means by the colour question.

The truth is that the South African Colour Question is only one phase in the world problem which arises from the economic competition of peoples with widely different standards, complicated by social distinctions, intensified by racial misunderstandings, and and distorted by fear.

In line with this definition of the problem the solution is that that

The Natives, who are now an inseparable part of the South African whole, must either continue, as now, to be a race of low-grade servants - a drag on the general prosperity, or they must be set by the white people on the road to efficiency and progress, even if only on grounds of European self-interest ... when the European comes to realize that black poverty, ignorance and degradation are as lowering to white society as his own slums, the salvation may be near.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 11

In what follows we hope to show that most of these assumptions about the role of the missionaries as well as the nature of what MacMillan calls the colour problem are untenable, hence they lead to a typically liberal obfuscation. The best way of examining a frontier situation is to have a clear idea of the participant groups and try to establish their respective interests as they saw them vis a vis other groups. Once this is done it will become clear that misunderstandings play a far less significant role than is generally supposed.

We have noted how the settlers saw the mission station at Baviaans Kloof (later Genadendal) as a threat to their labour supply even though at that stage labour could be obtained through the purchase of slaves. The British stopped the slave trade in 1807 so the settlers became even more dependent on Khoi Khoi labour at the very time when the wave of missionary activity was making its impact at the Cape. It is against this background of labour shortage that the encounter between the settlers, the missionaries, the Government and the Khoi Khoi should be examined. In fact even before the restrictions on the slave trade were imposed in 1807 the demand for labour had increased because of the presence of warships at the Cape and the lifting of various cumbersome restrictions on trade thus leading to a minor economic boom.

Another important factor in the frontier situation was the fact that the last decade of the eighteenth century saw not only turbulence and rebellion among the Boers of Graaff-keinet and Swellendam, but more seriously a revolt among the supposedly docile and humble Khoi Khoi. It is important to note that one of the reasons for the unrest among the settlers was in fact the question of their desire for a



free hand in dealing with the Khoi Khoi. Marais states:<sup>30</sup> Some of the demands addressed to the Government by the 'Nationals' of the Swellendam district, who revolted in sympathy with the Boers of Graff-Keinet, showed clearly enough the position in which many Boers would have liked to have the aborigines placed. They asked inter alia that all Bushmen captured by commandos or by private individuals might be retained in perpetual slavery by the Boers - they and their children after them; that the custom, recently abolished according to which the Boers retained in their service Hottentot children born on their farms till their twenty-fifth year, might be restored; and that no hottentot who left his employment should in future be allowed to take refuge in any 'colony', i.e. village, but that after his complaints had been noted down he should be forthwith returned to his 'lord and master'.

There were further Boer uprisings in 1799 and 1801. Among the complaints brought forward by the leaders of the 1801 insurrection were the fact that the Khoi Khoi were allowed to worship in the church at Graff-Keinet and the fact that they were being instructed by the L.M.S. missionaries "and thereby put upon an equal footing with Christians". However, more interesting is the fact that the 1799 Boer uprising had far reaching consequences for inter-group relations in the Cape. Khoi Khoi troops were dispatched to Graff-Keinet to assist in the crushing of the rebellion. Other Khoi Khoi from the farms also joined the regiment. After the rebellion had

---

<sup>30</sup>

Marais, J. S. op cit. p. 113.

been crushed van der Leur decided to disarm them.

Fearing that it was the intention of the authorities to force them to return to the Boers' service, the Khoi Khoi fled and threw in their lot with the Xhosas, who had meanwhile invaded the colony. Within a short time the revolting Khoi Khoi mustered 700 men who had 300 horses and 150 guns in their possession; and those who still remained in the Boers' service were not at all well-disposed. Now such an alliance between the Khoi Khoi who had up to then been regarded as completely servile and trustworthy had profound results on white thinking at the Cape. The possibility of the alliance spreading to include the slaves was a frightening possibility for those who cherished the status quo. So whereas the Khoi Khoi had always been associated in settler and official thinking with labour, they now raised a new problem of order on the frontier.

Now this class of free-roving men whose very existence was a threat to the established order of things was an inevitable result of white expansion. What conquest had done was to produce a 'landless proletariat' (in a very special sense of the term) without providing the economic structure to absorb it. Such employment opportunities as there were, were very unattractive to the Khoi Khoi because the Boers did not rely on competitive inducements from which the Khoi Khoi labourers could have benefitted but rather on forcible restrictions of movement, on the one hand, and to forcible captures and removals, on the other. The mixed-blooded groups who were inhabiting the northern periphery of the colony were standing evidence of the fact that within the colony itself the only choice that there was for the mass of

the blacks was slavery or serfdom.

Marais describes the Khoi Khoi revolt as a 'revolt of farm servants' but does not discuss the problem as to why they did revolt at that particular time. It seems plausible to find part of the explanation in the specifically frontier situation and the presence of the Xhosas across the border in particular. A striking parallel can be found in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Russia when the unfree peasantry formed alliances with the Cossacks against their oppressors. Robinson describes the situation as follows:

That the Cossacks should resist the extension of the servile agricultural system into the 'step', was just as natural as that the Sioux and Apaches should attack the wagon-trains of the American frontier; but in Eastern Europe there was one factor for which no important counterpart is to be found in American history: the peasants on the estates of Russia and Poland became the natural allies of the Cossacks, and the great social wars, when they came, were destined to take essentially the form of a double attack upon serfdom - an attack from below, and an attack from beyond the border. If the Indians of the American West could have formed an effective alliance with the Negro slaves of the South the earlier social uprisings of Russia and Poland might have been in some measure duplicated in the United States.<sup>31</sup>

We hope that so far our account has established the following points:

1. That for the frontier farmers the most pressing problems were those relating to land and labour and that they saw the solution to these as a free hand with both the Xhosas and the Khoi Khoi.

---

<sup>31</sup>

Robinson, G. T. Rural Russia under the Old Regime, p. 18

2. That for the authorities, both British and Batavian, the problem of the frontier was a problem of order which had three aspects, namely, to keep the Boers under control; to hold the Xhosas at bay; and to keep the Khoi Khoi subservient.

3. That for the Khoi Khoi the problem was one of survival and the alliance with the Xhosas had opened one possibility of solving this problem.

4. That for the Xhosas the problem was to keep their freedom, land and cattle against the onslaught of settler expansionism.

Before we examine the role of the missionaries we have to ask a preliminary question concerning the point at which they entered the colonial class structure. In the frontier situation there were in fact two social orders interacting and influencing each other but the question of group hegemony had not been settled through conquest and dispossession yet. On the white side of the border there was already this bifurcation of society into white settlers with vast farms and stock, and landless semi-free Khoi Khoi and slaves. We note again that this is a social order based on conquest which is both a political and economic factor. So, in short, we find what Morner has termed in the Latin American context "the typically colonial dichotomy between conquerors and conquered, masters and servants or slaves".<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Morner, M. Race Mixture in the History of Latin America, p. 6

Now the missionaries enter this class/race structure from above. However, their interests are not identical to those of the farmers. Theirs is a problem of saving soul and hence they have a different conception of the class struggle. Marvin Harris,<sup>33</sup> in explaining the paradox of the New Laws of 1542 passed by the Spanish Crown prohibiting the enslavement of Indians in the New world at the very time when the African slave trade was beginning to develop into one of the world's most important commercial ventures, notes that since the mission of the Church was to save souls its power was directly related to the number of converts and hence if for no other reason the Church could not stand idly by while the aboriginal population of the new world was being destroyed by the colonists. In other words far from humanitarian principles being the sole determinant of the Church's stand on such issues, it was power considerations (or material interests) that were decisive. This is the only way in which the apparently contradictory attitude of the Church towards the enslavement of Indians on the one hand, and that of the Africans on the other can be explained. The Church frequently viewed the enslavement of the latter as a religious duty consonant with the highest moral principles.

So the hostility of the Boers to the missionaries was related to the issue of control over the labour power of the Khoi Khoi. If the Boers had been interested only in Khoi Khoi labour on a free wage basis the conflict would have been less bitter because the Khoi Khoi resident

---

33

Harris, M. Patterns of Race in the Americas.

in the mission stations still had to work on the farms because these institutions could never hope to be viable self-sufficient economic entities. Moreover, because they instructed the Khoi Khoi in various useful skills of settled life they were in fact major preparation centers for exploitation by the farmers.

However, the Boers having been used to slave labour and serfdom hardly had any conception of free labour. This desire for total control over the Khoi Khoi was bound to result in a clash with the missionaries who were striving for their own form of control. Van der Kemp's mission to the Xhosas had failed, so in a way the Khoi Khoi were the last resort for him and his personal commitment to serving to God which had developed in rather tragic circumstances

It is from the perspective of the missionary institution as a mechanism of control that we approach the question of the role of this group in influencing events on the frontier. In 1803 the Batavian Government authorised Van der Kemp to found the first of the purely missionary institutions at Bethelsdorp, and in 1813 a migration from Bethelsdorp founded Theopolis. By 1822 more institutions had grown up - Somerset made a distinction between those which were the property of the London Missionary Society, and others like Genadendal and Pacaltsdorp over which the Government claimed a special jurisdiction as survivals of the so-called 'Hottentot Captaincies'.

As Macmillan<sup>34</sup> states

---

<sup>34</sup> Macmillan op. cit. p. 37.

Bethelsdorp and others soon became the refuge of the dependent classes, the infirm, the weak, and the aged ... In addition, as the years passed, the more intelligent of the Hottentots came to learn that only on the mission stations had they any secure base for the carrying on of their trades, or even for transport riding. On ordinary farms - even with the development, after 1809, of protective contracts of service - the operation of restrictive pass laws and of the system euphemistically known as 'apprenticeship' gave some warrant for the allegation that the lot of the Hottentot was worse than that of slaves.

In the Brazilian context Frazier<sup>35</sup> has noted that it was in the Jesuit missions that the Indian submitted to the discipline of regular labour and ceased his resistance to the Portuguese.

Now the bane of the liberal approach is to stress out of all proportion the protective function of these institutions. According to this view (and also that of right-wing historians) we are led into believing that the missionaries and the Government officials aligned themselves with the Khoi Khoi in a struggle against the repressive tendencies of the settler farmers. We are told that as early as 1799 General Dundas reduced the terms of Khoi Khoi service to a formal contract. Also that in 1802 the British Governor's adjutant wrote to van der Kemp urging him to continue his exertions on behalf of the Khoi Khoi of Graaff-Reinet and promising representations to the future Government on behalf of the Khoi Khoi.

---

35

Frazier, F. On Race Relations, p. 84.

Whereas it is possible to interpret all these as signs of good faith on the part of the authorities it is equally clear that the problem of order at this stage was a pressing one for them. The Earl of Caledon was so impressed with the work of the institutions that he offered the L.M.S. a site at Groene Kloof to set up another one. The 'Commissioners of Circuit' for the year 1813 reported that Genedendal had 232 huts occupied by 1157 souls. They also praised the inhabitants for their "industry, order and subordination". Somerset added 3600 morgen to Genedendal. This was a long time before he realized that "religion retrograded, and that useful class of labourers (Hottentot and Pastard) was subtracted from those occupations to which they were best suited, without benefit to themselves and with great detriment to the public".

The whole problem relating to the maintenance of order was neatly outlined by the Fiscal W. S. van Ryneveld in 1801 in his plan for amending the frontier Police. We shall dwell on this document in detail because it throws light on a lot of important problems. The Fiscal begins with an observation about the inadequacy of the police to preserve good order in general and to administer justice to everyone in particular. Secondly, he notes that the boundaries of the Colony have been extended by slow and insensible degrees under the former Government which sanctioned this territorial expansion not only by its granting lands, but also by receiving rents for them.

Also, though laws were enacted and strict orders were issued against injuring or maltreating the natives of the country, no public notice was properly taken of the



extortion and depredations of Farmers on the Khoi Khoi depriving them of their lands and afterwards driving them into the interior, or forcing them to become their servants.

"Men without any idea of education, grown up in idleness, and in the unrestrained indulgence of the wild passions of nature, composed at all times the bulk of the inhabitants of the interior parts of this country, ignorant and being accustomed from their infancy to command over slaves, Hottentots or other tribes of people whom they considered as inferior to themselves, they could have no other notions than those of arrogance, dissoluteness and other vices, pernicious to the social order.

The Hottentots already reduced by the Peasants to slavery, by the right by which the strong will usurp over the weak, have often times showed, and recently given convincing proofs, that they are by no means indifferent as to their situation, that they aim at revenge whenever opportunity may favour their design.

The farmer, on the other side, perceives very well that the Hottentot is only restrained by awe and a superior power. He is jealous of all such regulations made in favour of the Hottentots, as may tend to increase his means to oppose himself to them - in short both parties, especially in the remote districts consider one another in the light of enemies, and in proportion as Government incline to favour the Hottentots and to protect them particularly against oppression, in the same proportion will discontent arise among the farmers who imagine that the interests of the Hottentots are preferred to their own and think themselves thereby

aggrieved.

It will therefore be always a difficult task for Government to regulate and adjust the interests of the contending parties, to cause justice to be done to everyone, and good order and tranquillity to be preserved throughout the whole colony. This end can never be obtained so long as the police remains in its present form. Peace may perhaps by an armed force be preserved for a short time, but real tranquillity will never be established by these means, discontents among the farmers and Hottentots will constantly require extraordinary measures, which will not only occasion great expense and trouble but never effect a lasting peace to the colony.

To this end, two material points appear to me most important:

1. The police in general relative to the Hottentots.
2. The particular amendment in the interior police itself as it regards both the Peasants and the Hottentots.

In respect of the Hottentots, these for the most part cannot at present but be servants to the farmers. They neither possess cattle, nor have other means of subsistence, and become dangerous subjects of society when suffered to wonder about, without being servants, or having a livelihood - they skulk in the woods, and if they can, steal the cattle of the farmers, upon which they live.

There are some who have cattle and dwell with their families in huts (kraalen), who can very easily remain there unmolested, and ought with all possible care to be

protected.

There exists a third class of Hottentots who belong to the school lately established here by the missionaries - these also merit every support, and indeed nothing appears more material than to encourage these institutions for the instructing and civilizing of the Hottentots. They thereby obtain a safe asylum against violence from the farmers and can then have no other inducement than good treatment from the farmers to go and serve them.

It will therefore be necessary to direct that no Hottentot is to be suffered to remain within the boundaries of this colony unless belonging to one or other of the following classes:

1. The class of Hottentots serving the farmers.
2. The licensed kraals or huts.
3. To the schools of the missionaries.

Every Hottentot serving an inhabitant ought to be registered by the magistrate of the district ... The Hottentot kraals in every district ought also to be duly registered ...

In a like manner shall the schools of the Hottentots established within the limits of the colony be registered. The missionaries and directors of such schools to be bound annually to deliver to the Landdrost an exact list, specifying the names of such Hottentots belonging to their schools. Care must however, be taken that too many Hottentots be not together in one school, unless they prove to the satisfaction of the magistrate that they have either through gardening, hiring themselves for the whole or part of the year, to the farmers in the neighbourhood, or other modes of industry,

means of subsistence.

For the rest, no Hottentot, unless belonging to one of the above legally established classes, shall be permitted to remain within the boundaries of this colony; but all wanderers and vagabonds ought immediately to be apprehended and placed either in public works, or in Kobben Island, there to labour for their bread."<sup>36</sup>

It was no accident that the first comprehensive legislation regulating the status of the Khoi Khoi enacted in 1809 provided that each Khoi Khoi "in the same manner as all inhabitants", must have a fixed place of abode, registered at his Landdrost's from which he was not to move without a pass. It also ordered the registration with full particulars of all labour contracts for periods of one month and upwards before the Fiscal, a Landdrost or a field cornet. It also decreed 'criminal' penalties against servants for the breach of their labour contracts. On the other hand, some of the provisions were designed, at least in theory, to protect the labourers.

It will be evident from our analysis so far that the particular conjuncture which we have conceptualized as the frontier situation is not just restricted to the Wars of Dispossession and the trade fairs which were held. It is a complex situation which has to be understood in its totality. So far we have seen how the presence of the Khosas across the border exacerbated the crisis within the expanding colonial society. We have also seen how social institutions play a different role to that which their founders aimed at and how

these roles are not static. Crises like the so-called Black Circuit and Slagter's Nek have to be interpreted as reflecting the tensions of the frontier situation. It will be the aim of the next section to explore further the conflicts involved and the various group strategies adopted and draw them together to show the peculiar version of stratification within which the mine-based socio-economic order developed.

CHAPTER FOURCONFLICT AND CONQUEST - THE EASTERN FRONTIER(Section B)

James Bryce<sup>1</sup> classified the cases of conflict or contact between what he called "civilized European and savage or semi-civilized aboriginal peoples" into three types. First, those cases where the indigenous race, though perhaps numerous, is comparatively weak, and unable to assimilate European civilization, or thrive under European rule, or even survive in the presence of a European population occupying the country.

To this class belong the extinction of the natives of the Antilles by the Spaniards, the disappearance of the natives of South Australia and Tasmania before British settlement, the dying out, or retirement to a few reserved tracts, of the aborigines who once occupied all North America east of the Rocky Mountains. The Russian advance in Siberia, the advance of Spanish and Italian and German colonists in the territories of La Plata in South America, may be added to this class, for though the phenomena are rather those of absorption than extinction, the result is practically the same. The country becomes European and the native races vanish.

Other writers have discussed this particular problem under two distinct but closely interrelated themes, namely, 'deliberate extermination' and 'spontaneous depopulation'.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bryce, J. Impressions of South Africa, pp. 71-73.

In Africa, in Asia and among the happy-go-lucky peoples scattered in the fortunate islands of the Oceanic Archipelago, depopulation follows from the fact, the mere fact, of white men's establishing themselves there. The birth rate falls; the death rate rises; the two phenomena together have meant the complete disappearance of certain Oceanic races: The Aboriginal Tasmanians and Australians, for instance.<sup>2</sup>

This author, in trying to account for this law of disappearance, relies on the approach developed by the anthropologist Pitt-Rivers<sup>3</sup> and finds the answer in the mere presence of Europeans. However, there is a basic flaw in this whole approach to the problem of race contact and conflict. For instance the question which it seeks to answer is by and large a false one. It hardly makes sense to ask the question as to why, if the European neither oppresses nor persecutes the native, does the birth rate fall and the death rate rise as these authors do. To ask the question as to why despite the policy of reservations there are only 250,000 Red Indians is to substitute propaganda for analysis.

According to Bryce the opposite class of cases arises where Europeans have conquered a country already filled by a more or less civilized population, which is so numerous and so prolific as to maintain itself with ease in their presence.

Such a case is the British conquest of India. The Europeans in India are, and must remain, a mere handful among the millions of industrious natives, who already constitute, in many districts, a population almost too numerous for the resources

---

<sup>2</sup>Maunier, R. The Sociology of Colonies, p.77

<sup>3</sup>Pitt-Rivers, G. H. The Clash of Culture and the Contact of Races.

of the country to support. Moreover, the climate is one in which a pure European race speedily dwindles away. The position of the Dutch in Java, and the French in Indo-China, is similar....

Finally Bryce observes that between these two extremes lies a third group of cases:

Those in which the indigenous race is, on the one hand, numerous and strong enough to maintain itself in the face of Europeans, while, on the other hand, there is plenty of room left for a considerable European population to press in climatic conditions not forbidding it to spread and multiply. Spaniards in Mexico and Peru, Russians in parts of central Asia, the French in North Africa, Spaniards in the Canary Isles, the English and Americans in Hawaii. In all these countries the new race and the old race can both live and thrive, neither of them killing off or crowding out the other, though in some, as in Hawaii, the natives tend to disappear, while in others as in Algeria, the immigrants do not much increase. Sometimes as in the Canary Isles and Mexico, the two elements blend, the native element being too numerous, though less advanced; and a mixed race is formed by intermarriage. Sometimes they remain, and seem likely to remain, as distinct as oil from water. South Africa belongs to this third class of cases.<sup>4</sup>

What emerges from this rather broad classification is the basic fact that patterns of social relations deriving from the factor of conquest, whilst they have some common factors which give them a distinctive character, are themselves not identical. So it is necessary in each case to analyse the particular conjuncture of specific factors with the view to arriving at general conclusions which give the rather broad

---

<sup>4</sup>Bryce, J. op. cit. p.73.



concepts like colonialism, conquest, colour-bar etc. a sharper and more dynamic content.

To be able to do this in our case it is necessary to analyse the social structure of all the groups involved in the frontier confrontation. In the first section attention was given to the settler group and the Khoi Khoi, so in this section we shall take a look at the social structure of the Nguni of which the frontier Xhosas were part. Of course, in the language of the frontier, strictly speaking, there is nothing like the social structure of the Nguni since the blanket term 'kafir' was used to refer to all the African groups and thus the latter assumed a racial rather than its normal religious meaning. Indeed a study of the language of the frontier with its labels and stereotypes of Africans as 'notorious and blood thirsty robbers', 'race of beings deaf to every reasonable proposal', 'irreclaimable, barbarous and perpetual enemies' or simply 'barbarian hordes', would show how these phrases representative of the frontier world view, served to reconcile some of the most brutal acts of murder and dispossession with an almost fanatical sense of self-righteous indignation on the part of the settlers, which today, in a slightly modified form, serves as a rationale for the most peculiar form of capitalist exploitation and the most extreme form of domination to have emerged from the plunder of the world by Europeans.

Perhaps the most sophisticated settler view of the social and political organization of the Africans was that expressed by Wilmot<sup>5</sup> who, writing in 1869, made the following

---

<sup>5</sup>Wilmot, A. The Life and Times of Sir Richard Southey, pp. 55-57

observations. Firstly, that nothing has had a greater effect upon their polity and government than their "peculiar law of succession, which permits the perpetual division by the eldest son of the great wife succeeding to his father's dignity, while the eldest son of the right hand' wife is constituted the head of a certain allotted portion of the tribe."

Secondly, he noted that it is a mistake to speak of the despotic government of the Chiefs - so far at least as the Xhosas and Thembus were concerned. He described the latter as an "admixture of feudalism with patriarchal customs". Also the most striking feature in the administration of justice was the punishment of every crime by a fine. "Persons are the property of the Chief, and consequently the penalties for acts of personal violence and murder are received by him. The regular resources of Government are fines, presents extorted during friendly visits, and the plunder consequent on warlike excursions."

His verdict was that many grave errors are noticeable in the system since the legislative, judicial, and executive departments are confounded.

Justice cannot be efficiently administered, as there is no code of laws to appeal to, or be guided by, and there is no fixed constitution or system of legislation. Lawlessness, predatory habits are constantly fostered, and the desire of gain and the prospect of revenge are the two ruling passions of the natives.

As regards matters of the spirit, like all other savages, their religion is a vile superstition which degrades women to the lowest level, while their social system classes

her among beasts of burden and the goods and chattels of her master. Polygamy, of course, is universally allowed, and under a system of purchase the number of wives bears proportion to the wealth of the husband. Concubinage is permitted, and the vilest and most degrading immorality prevails. No idea of purity or virtue is permitted to exist, and customs which cannot be mentioned still prevail in close proximity to Christian mission stations and to a British colony.

#### Finally

The Kafirs believe in a Supreme Being, but most of their rites are connected with the worship of their deceased ancestors, whose ghosts they endeavour to propitiate. Christianity has made no real impression upon them and missionary efforts are a failure. In the words of Mr. Warner (Tambookie agent) 'The Gospel has been preached to them for the last fifty years, and some attempts have been made towards civilizing them; but the Kafirs, nationally considered, remain just as they ever were, no visible difference can be discovered. They are as perfectly heathen now as they were in the days of van der Kemp, and so they ever will continue so long as their political government continues to exist in its Pagan form.

The summary of the frontier situation which follows logically from the above description is that

two migratory streams were setting towards the Eastern districts, one composed of kafirs proceeding from the East, and the other of colonists coming from the westward. Fierce and warlike savages, whose chief occupation was pillage, necessarily came into contact with the Frontier farmers, and numerous sanguinary encounters took place.

We have dwelt in detail on this settler view of the African and his culture for two reasons. Firstly, while there is some justification for asserting that the colonial encounter is a situation of 'misunderstanding' as some authors have done, it is also the case that this amalgam of fact and fantasy provided the basis for a coherent world view which has outlasted those frontier encounters of a century or so ago and more importantly has served as a guide for prescribing social action in so far as the latter pertained to group interests. Secondly, a complex problem arises in situations of race

contact regarding the objective reality and what the participants regard to be the situation. No doubt the Africans had and still have their own stereotyped views about their opponents, and these have changed from time to time, however, these are less easy to discover and have been only marginally relevant in their choice of action.

The Xhosas had already been in occupation of the present Transkei and Ciskei for centuries by the time of the influx of the migrant Fingo and other refugee groups who fled from Tshaka's reign in Natal. Within the Xhosa nation there were two major sub-groups which had emerged by the time of the confrontation with the whites, namely, the Ngqikas and the Gcalekas both tracing common descent from Phalo but having split because of the intricacies of the Xhosa succession pattern. There were other smaller groups, splinter groups led by minor chiefs and with a greater or lesser independent status. Further, in some parts the Xhosas had intermingled with the Khoi Khoi to form, notably, the Gqunukhwebe. For instance in 1772 Thurnberg<sup>6</sup> observed, 'Hottentots and Caffres lived promiscuously near this river (Gantoos), as on the frontier of the two countries, the real Caffraria beginning several miles further up the country.' Of more significance than this intermixture was the presence of refugees later among the Xhosas living in a subordinate position. We shall later see how the British officials in collaboration with the missionaries exploited the presence of these groups for their own interests.

---

<sup>6</sup>Thunberg, C.P. Travels in Europe, Africa and Asia ... between 1770 and 1779, Vol. 1, p. 203

Durkheim<sup>7</sup> asserted that the main distinction between industrial and pre-industrial societies was that whereas in the former cohesion rested on the division of labour (organic solidarity), in the latter societal cohesion derived from the strength of what he called the collective conscience, hence mechanical solidarity, or the solidarity of resemblance. Without accepting the entire implications of the Durkheimian position we may note the dominant role played by kinship ties in the social organization of the Nguni groups. Traditionally none of the groups had any marked degree of economic division of labour, except along sex and age lines. Each household was, to a large extent a replica of every other so that economic interdependence was not an important factor in linking various households together. Instead, bonds of common descent which ramified through the country linked together various households irrespective of geographical spacing. In this respect what marked off the Nguni groups from all the others was that they prohibited marriage or sexual relations of any kind, with people related through any of the four grand parents.

The basic unit in Nguni political life was the 'isizwe' commonly referred to as the tribe. (It is interesting to note that in modern nationalist terminology the term isizwe refers not only to nation in the restricted sense of that word, but to African people or just black people.) Traditionally isizwe referred to a body of people organized under the rule of an independent Chief. Each such group had its own name, occupied its own territory, managed its own affairs, and acted as a single united body for purposes of defence. The most important factor in determining membership was allegiance to the Chief. Thus it was common that refugees from another Chief's domain were

---

<sup>7</sup>Durkheim, E. The Division of Labour in Society.

accepted and enjoyed citizenship rights. Indeed it would seem that the most common resort for people who were dissatisfied with their Chief was absconding and joining another tribe.

It was quite common that disputes arising out of the problems of succession or some other complication within the royal family led to splits with the malcontents setting up an independent unit of their own. Wars often led to the incorporation of different groups under one Chief and the disintegration of others. So in fact the isizwe was in no sense a closed group.

In the execution of his duties the Chief was helped by various councils. Local divisions within the tribe, such as districts, sub-districts, villages and wards, were in turn administered by their respective heads, assisted by small local councils. Each petty local authority was responsible directly or through some senior local authority. The position of chieftainship was hereditary the crown being passed from the father to the senior son of the main or great wife who was not necessarily the first one. In fact most of the squabbles relating to succession arose from the fact that often when the Chief died the proper heir would still be too young to assume office which necessitated the appointment of some uncle or other senior relative as regent. It was not unusual that once in office such a regent would consolidate his position and deny the legitimate heir his traditional right. The popular regent as a case of charismatic authority has to be distinguished from another type, namely, the 'prophet' who, usually in times of national crisis and disunity would emerge on a ticket of a political utopia.

It will be obvious so far that the Chief wielded a lot of power. He was the symbol of tribal unity, the central

figure round whom tribal life revolved. He was at once ruler, judge, maker and guardian of the law, repository of wealth, dispenser of gifts, leader in war, priest and magician of his people. He was entitled to tribute both in the form of labour and in kind and had the power to punish anyone failing to render his customary tribute. Not only did he have the right to send anyone anywhere on any errand but he could also call upon his subjects to perform various tasks for him and his household or on behalf of the tribe as a whole. Besides having servants directly attached to his household, Xhosa young men came from all parts to serve at the Chief's court, fetching wood, making fires and herding cattle. Most important was the fact that control over the use and distribution of tribal land was vested in him. However, the land was not his personal possession, a fact which caused immense problems in the frontier struggles with the settlers. With the exception of that portion of land which was reserved for him and his family, on more or less the same basis as for anyone else, none of the land belonged to the Chief, nor could he dispose of it except gratuitously and to members of his own tribe.

These apparently despotic powers of the Chief drew the attention of most European observers. Judgements varied from the one made by Wilmot about persons being the property of the Chief which we quoted earlier to some versions of 'benevolent despotic' interpretations of which there were very few. It is interesting that an observer like Dr. Philip<sup>8</sup> should have written that

---

8

Philip, J. quoted in Macmillan, W. M. Lantu, Boer, and Briton, p.95.

Individually, savages may be as rational (as far as their observation goes) as Europeans, but it is in union and government that they lack the justice and lawfulness of civilized nations. The power of the Chief...tends to express force rather than justice. But without a religious basis for their civilization they use their knowledge only to rob their neighbours and then lose all again in marauding expeditions.

However a closer look at the institution of chieftainship among the Nguni calls for a slight qualification of the above view as Philip himself later found out. This apparent despotism was checked by some measure of countervailing factors.

He must in the first place watch over the interests of his subjects and keep himself informed of tribal affairs generally. He is said to be the father or herdsman of his people, and as such has to look after them, treat them well and justly, and see that no harm or misfortune befalls them. He must give ear to all his subjects, irrespective of rank; and much of his time is spent daily in his official courtyard listening to news, petitions, and grievances from all parts of the tribe. His accumulated wealth...must be used for the tribal benefit as well as for his own maintenance; and much of his popularity depends upon his reputation for hospitality and generosity.

An unpopular Chief risked the plight of being without followers and as Sandile observed "the patrimony of a chief is land and men".

Before we proceed to the problem of stratification in general in traditional Xhosa society it is important to note the importance of their clan system which in Monica Wilson's<sup>9</sup> reckoning "interlocks with the ownership of cattle and begins to crumble when men no longer depend upon inherited herds", as well as the fact that their regiments in war were organized on a clan basis unlike the Zulus and Sothos who based theirs on age groups. Further, we must note the system of paramountcy under which the

---

<sup>9</sup>Wilson M. E. Thompson L. ed. The Oxford History of South Africa, Vol. 1, Chap.3



Chiefs of junior tribes recognized the Chief of the tribe from which they had separated as their superior. Cases were sometimes referred to him for settlement, or on appeal; and also some form of tribute was paid by the junior Chief to the paramount Chief.

Also we must note that with regards to property and inheritance items like food, livestock, dwellings, clothing, household utensils and other objects acquired by direct production, by barter, or in return for serving others, were used by each household to satisfy its own needs. Rights exercised over these goods by members of a household were defined in various ways by law and custom. Further, it was only in regard to land for residence and cultivation that private rights were universally recognized. Every household head had an exclusive right to land for building his home and for cultivation. Natural resources of the land - earth, water, wood, grass, clay, edible plants and fruits were all common property, never reserved for the use of any particular persons. In fact even on arable land over which personal rights were exercised other people could graze their stock on the stalks once the crops had been reaped and anyone could gather firewood and wild plants from it.

The extent to which members of the tribe enjoyed the advantages and protection varied according to their rank, sex, and age. Hereditarily ascribed status was confined to the Chiefs, sub-Chiefs and headmen, with their respective families. Commoners could acquire prestige through knowledge of the law, oratory, magic, bravery, and wealth factors which enhanced the chances of one being made a headman or a councillor. Social distinctions

were often made according to tribal origins in matters of ritual and public life. Incorporated foreigners and their immediate descendants seldom commanded the same influence or received the same consideration as tribesmen of long-established stock; and among the latter a similar range of differentiation existed according to seniority of descent.

The accumulation of wealth in cattle inevitably led to distinctions of a class nature. A system of clientship whereby a poor man sought from a Chief or wealthy neighbour cattle on loan. He could use the milk and was usually recompensed with part of the increase. In return he had to carry out certain duties for his benefactor. The system worked because some possessed 'several hundreds' or 'above a thousand' cattle - herds so large that they and their families could neither tend them nor use the milk - and prestige depended largely on the distribution of wealth. The class nature of these distinctions made them less rigid. Actually, it would seem that differentiation based on wealth and age, unlike that that based on ascribed factors, tended to be less effective in creating cleavages within the society especially given the nature of the kinship network. A more acute problem of stratification was that created by the influx of refugee groups who were fleeing from political upheavals elsewhere. The Ningos among the Xhosa and the MaSarwa (San) or Kxalaxadi among the Tswana were a case in point.

We must end this rather descriptive and highly schematic account of the social structure of the Xhosa with an observation about the importance of land as the basis for their economic and political organization.

122

The livelihood of the Bantu is intimately bound up with their system of land tenure. They erect their dwellings on the land, cultivate it, graze their livestock upon it, and hunt over its surface. They use its water for domestic purposes and for their herds and flocks; they eat the wild fruits and other foods it produces, and make medicine from its vegetation; they convert its wood into huts, palisades and various utensils, and its reeds and grass into basket work, thatch and string; and they extract from it metals, clay for their pots, and earth for the floors and walls of their huts. In the regulation of the land and its resources provision is made for each method of exploitation.<sup>10</sup>

It will be obvious from our account first of the settler society and then that of the Xhosas that the two systems, though both relying on the use of the resource of land for grazing and cultivation, were in fact completely different. If we compared factors like the kinship network and attitudes towards private property among the Xhosa with the rugged possessive individualism of the frontier settlers; the political system with the Chief as its pivot with the anarchistic tendencies of the Boers; the absence of slavery as a mode of labour exploitation with the settler flair for corvee; the practice of ancestor worship and witch-smelling with primitive fanatical Calvinism, patterns of marriage and the respective role of market operations in both societies. It would be quite obvious that the stress that the pluralists place on cultural differences is not misplaced and the strength of their case against those who want to ignore this very important dimension of colonial reality which affects both the nature of conquest as well as the patterns of inter-group relations which are not only

---

<sup>10</sup>

Schapera, I. ed. The Bantu speaking Tribes of South Africa, p. 156.

a historical legacy of these societies but continue to determine their very nature albeit in different economic and political milieux, becomes quite obvious.

However, our acceptance of the pluralistic dimension is not unqualified. Hoetink<sup>11</sup> has observed the tendency of the pluralists to isolate one stage in the historical conjuncture of different groups (the first stage) and elevate it into a timeless abstraction on which a whole theory of society is based. (Hoetink does not actually push the critique this far but this is essentially his point.) In fact to maintain that there is complete sociological 'apartheid' between the different segments would be to describe a pre-conquest situation which was threatened by the activities of the missionaries and the traders even before complete military and economic subjugation was attained by the whites. In fact Frank's<sup>12</sup> observation that the supposedly pure remnants of the traditional order of things (the so-called traditional enclaves) are themselves a product of capitalistic underdevelopment is extremely instructive here on a general level. It is very interesting to observe with Robertson<sup>13</sup> that what is regarded in present day South Africa as a symbol of traditionalism, namely, the red blanket, in fact owes more to the search for outlets by British manufacturers in the last century than to Xhosa design.

Another criticism of the pluralist approach (to the extent that it is culturologicistic) which we consider to be relevant here comes from a scholar of convinced functionalist persuasion, namely, Lloyd Braithwaite,<sup>14</sup> who maintains that

<sup>11</sup> Hoetink, H. The Two Variants in Caribbean Race Relations.

<sup>12</sup> Frank, A. G. Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America.

<sup>13</sup> Robertson, H. M. "150 Years of Economic Contact between Black and White" Journal of South African Economy, 1934.

<sup>14</sup> Braithwaite, L. "Social Stratification and Cultural Pluralism", Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. 83, 1960, pp. 186-187.

The problem of the plural society is indeed a problem of social structure posed by the existence of marked differences in culture, but a society or social system cannot be defined in cultural terms by merely observing the presence or absence of cultural traits; it must be done in terms of social action, that is the interaction of social roles.

If we ignore the last point about roles, Braithwaite's point seems to us quite valid in so far as it opposes the analysis of culture as an absolute determinant at the expense of such important factors as political super and subordination, economic exploitation and general imperative coordination. We are aware of the fact that the language of pluralism has ceased to be in terms of purely cultural differences and has matured to a stage where it now stresses 'differential incorporation'. However, it is our view that this is just a mere change of colours without modifying the underlying theoretical presuppositions. Any fruitful line of approach should reject the cultural separatist implications of the pluralist approach in both its explicit and disguised form on the grounds suggested by both Hoetink and Braithwaite, and proceed to do exactly the opposite of what Braithwaite proposes to do which is to relapse into further functionalist strictures.

Magnus Morner<sup>15</sup> writing on the conquest of South America by the Iberians has made the point that "violence possesses special characteristics during warfare between peoples representing widely different civilizations". In a similar vein Frazier<sup>16</sup> explored the implications of the absence of common ethical norms in such situations. There is no doubt

---

<sup>15</sup>Morner, M. Race Mixture in the History of Latin America.

<sup>16</sup>Frazier, F. Race and Culture Contacts in the Modern World.

about the importance of the degree of violence and the nature of the process of conquest for the kind of society that emerges afterwards. In this respect one only needs to contrast present day South American societies say with Australian society. However, this violence and its course has to be understood within the context of the aims of the conquerors, in fact the question as to whether the result is complete extermination or not has as much to do with the strength of the indigenous group as with the settler needs for labour.

In the previous section we noted the fact that the most pressing problem for the frontier settlers was that of land and labour. Van der Merwe,<sup>17</sup> amongst others, has noted the fact that in the South African settler expansion movement trekking was the easy way out for the poorer landholders or the sons of large families who lacked the capital and skill to establish themselves in the districts of old settlement, and that on the whole the well-to-do farmers generally stayed at home. He states that on each successive frontier the firstcomers found plentiful land to compensate their poverty of capital and skill; but the plenty disappeared when other men trokked in to share with them. Then the land itself began to suffer. From the second half of the eighteenth century onwards van der Merwe has found in the official records and the observations of travellers plentiful and emphatic testimony to the degeneration of pastures. Good grasses were eaten and their place taken by rhinoceros bush, cactus and other useless plants; large stretches of the land were exposed to wind erosion; springs were dried out. The Boers saw what was happening. Some of them said it was

---

<sup>17</sup> Van der Merwe, P. J. Trek

punishment of God; others said simply that the veld was growing old.

On the question of labour we noted already the strains put on the supply of labour by the abolition of the slave trade at a time when the fetters on the market which had been imposed by the Dutch East India Company were being removed and the resultant antipathy of the farmers to the mission stations which they saw as a further threat to their labour supply. Now while the presence of the Xhosas on the frontier presented a problem in so far as the expansionist aims of the settlers were concerned it also suggested a solution once and for all to the problem of labour but the essential precondition for this was indeed the forcible closure of resources in a more drastic fashion than that suggested by Nieboer.<sup>18</sup> The large measure of self-sufficiency enjoyed by the Xhosa subsistence economy presented a serious enough obstacle for the harnessing of their labour power. Also, the absence of a settler state committed to the promotion of immediate settler interests presented another problem. Indeed for a long time the officials at the Cape were committed to the policy of restricting intercourse between the settlers and the Xhosas to a minimum.

Max Weber in dealing with the problem of the origins of seigniorial proprietorship noted the course of internal differentiation through the conquest and subjugation of some enemy people.

Originally, conquered enemies are slaughtered, under some circumstances with cannibalistic orgies. Only as a secondary matter develops the practice of exploiting their labour power and transforming them into a servile class of burden bearers. Thus arises a class of overlords who by their possession of human beings are placed in a position to clear and till land, a thing impossible to the common freeman. The slave or servile population might be exploited communally, remaining in the possession

<sup>18</sup>

Nieboer, H. Slavery as an Industrial System.

punishment of God; others said simply that the veld was growing old.

On the question of labour we noted already the strains put on the supply of labour by the abolition of the slave trade at a time when the fetters on the market which had been imposed by the Dutch East India Company were being removed and the resultant antipathy of the farmers to the mission stations which they saw as a further threat to their labour supply. Now while the presence of the Xhosas on the frontier presented a problem in so far as the expansionist aims of the settlers were concerned it also suggested a solution once and for all to the problem of labour but the essential precondition for this was indeed the forcible closure of resources in a more drastic fashion than that suggested by Nieboer.<sup>18</sup> The large measure of self-sufficiency enjoyed by the Xhosa subsistence economy presented a serious enough obstacle for the harnessing of their labour power. Also, the absence of a settler state committed to the promotion of immediate settler interests presented another problem. Indeed for a long time the officials at the Cape were committed to the policy of restricting intercourse between the settlers and the Xhosas to a minimum.

Max Weber in dealing with the problem of the origins of seigniorial proprietorship noted the course of internal differentiation through the conquest and subjugation of some enemy people.

Originally, conquered enemies are slaughtered, under some circumstances with cannibalistic orgies. Only as a secondary matter develops the practice of exploiting their labour power and transforming them into a servile class of burden bearers. Thus arises a class of overlords who by their possession of human beings are placed in a position to clear and till land, a thing impossible to the common freeman. The slave or servile population might be exploited communally, remaining in the possession

<sup>18</sup>

Nieboer, H. Slavery as an Industrial System.



of the group as a whole, and used for the collective tillage of the soil ... or they might be utilized individually, being allotted to individual overlords for the tillage of their personal holdings. This latter development establishes a nobility of conquest.<sup>19</sup>

It might seem anachronistic to invoke the concept of a nobility of conquest which is more suitable for explaining the position of helots in Sparta than the individualistic tendencies of the frontier Boers. However, if we consider the fact that the whole notion of free labour was as alien to these people as the notion of collective bargaining by Africans is a nightmare to present day South African capitalists the anachronism becomes only apparent. In fact an examination of the patterns of labour exploitation in the later Boer Republics would support the contention that what emerged there prior to the discovery of the mineral resources was more akin to colonial feudalism than capitalism.

The process of conquest thus presented itself in two stages, namely, the expulsion of the Africans from their land and, secondly, coercing them to offer their labour on the settlers' terms. The two processes are closely intertwined but the fact of dispossession does not automatically lead to the solution of the labour problem. It is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. To complete the process, political power must be available to coerce the indigenous inhabitants to labour for the whites even when they can maintain a miserable existence of a fairly independent nature. Hence the Glen Grey

---

<sup>19</sup>

Weber, M. General Economic History, p.55

Act and other forms of colonial taxation measures are significant not as tribute in money but as means of labour regimentation.

Already it will be obvious why the policy of restricting intercourse was a complete failure. To begin with, the unsettled condition of the African groups led to the appearance of refugee groups who sought employment among the settlers. Thus as early as 1795, according to Cory,<sup>20</sup> to maintain peace, all intercourse between the farmers and the Africans was prohibited; all Africans in their employ were to be sent back to their own country, all white men in 'Kaffirland' to return to the Colony, and then no one to cross the Fish River in one direction or the other without special permission. This scheme turned out to be a mere illusion in face of the demands of the Boer inhabitants of the eastern districts who had written from Somerset East asking to be allowed "to occupy the lands of the Kat and Koonap Rivers, that is, to invade Kaffirland and seize upon tracts of land to the exclusion of the Kaffirs." The truth is that although the Fish River, first indicated as the boundary as early as 1774 and officially remained so until 1847, was supposed to be the line of demarcation, the forces inherent in the logic of settler expansionism were too strong for the meaningful maintenance of such boundaries.

As indicated in the first section, trade between the Boers and the Africans went on intermittently throughout the major part of the eighteenth century. However, official recognition of this fait accompli only came in 1817 when Governor

---

<sup>20</sup>

Cory, G. M. The Rise of South Africa, Vol. 11

Somerset instituted a system of passes to allow Africans to visit a fair to be held twice a year, first in Grahamstown and later at Fort Willshire on the Keiskama. These fairs were a great attraction in the life of the eastern frontier. After a fair at Fort Willshire was established in 1824 the price of ivory paid to the Khosa rose steeply and by 1831 Grahamstown was exporting annually £50,000 of goods of which £27,000 was in hides and £3,000 in ivory, and the Khosa were acquiring not only the regular trade goods - blankets, beads, and metals - but also horses and guns. In 1827 General Bourke made these more frequent and also gave a few traders permission to enter through the more open country to the north of the Winterberg.

In 1830 the fairs were judged unnecessary, restrictions were lifted and persons of good character were permitted to pass and trade freely anywhere. By 1832 there were 'traders all over Kafirland', at least as far as the Mthatha (Umtata). They numbered about two hundred men, and many had their families with them. In the five years from 1831 to 1835 the value of hides and skins exported from the Colony doubled until it accounted for one quarter of the country's exports. In the war of 1835 the Xhosas attacked these traders and their property.

The frontier fairs present an extreme example of the model of intercourse that revolves only around the phenomenon of the market. However, at this stage, we cannot talk about a plural society because in fact two societies were interacting, in other words these were truly international occasions. On the other hand the study of the life of the trader and the missionary presents us with an interesting case of a society which is invade

by foreign ideology and capitalistic traits prior to the factor of conquest, thus generating new economic and spiritual needs.

MacMillan<sup>21</sup> has observed that isolated traders, like missionaries, readily enough, adapted themselves to life among the Bantu, but in the 1820's, as in our own day, it was a very different matter for members of the Bantu race to fit into the much more complex structure of colonial society. The truth is that it is a grave error to compare the position of these groups committed to a value, namely, making money and saving souls respectively, to that of groups who enter colonial society as chattels.

We have shown how the policy of non-intercourse failed as regards trade. As regards the problem of labour relations it is an interesting paradox that a scheme which had been conceived with the view to strengthening frontier defence by settling British farmers in Albany should have caused the failure of the attempt to keep the races geographically apart. In the 1820's new laws were passed prohibiting the use of slave labour in Albany and in the Ceded territory. In addition, the 1820 settlers were not allowed at first to employ either Khoi Khoi or Africans on their farms. This made the labour situation very acute for this group who had been given farms of a smaller size with the view to promoting more intensive farming. In addition to the problems of wheat rust and the fact that the colonial government reserved to itself the entire supply of the troops, the monopoly of the only internal market, the problem of labour was quite significant in determining the early misfortunes of these people. It was only in 1825 that they were given permission to employ Khoi Khoi and African labour on their farms.

---

<sup>21</sup>MacMillan, W. M. Bantu, Boer and Briton

It is also an interesting fact that the frontier Boers whose complaints about the 'natural thieving propensities of the Kaffirs' have been elevated to the status of a law of explanation in most sections of South African history should have found it convenient to exploit African labour. As early as 1823 Brownlee wrote to Mrs. Williams of how the Africans were being induced into the service of the Boers, sometimes with threats of Robben Island if they refused. It is quite significant that just before the passing of the extremely important Ordinance 50 of 1828 General Bourke had found it necessary to pass Ordinance 49 earlier that year providing for the admission of Africans into the Colony; and authorizing the nearest border field-cornet to grant passes to any who desired to enter the service of the colonial farmers. Though this Ordinance was supposed to have been suspended in August 1829 this did not make any difference in so far as the employment of Africans within the Colony which by 1840 had become an established practice, was concerned.

In fact the importance of African labour partly derived from the provisions of Ordinance 50 which to some extent freed the Khoi Khoi long subjected to serfdom, not that this offered any meaningful alternative to economic subjection to the farmers. The settler clamour for an Act to prohibit vagrancy was in fact a logical reaction to a situation where the problem of labour was becoming quite critical. Frederick Nussbaum<sup>22</sup> discussing the organization of labour in the age of early

---

22

Nussbaum, F. History of the Economic Institutions of Modern Europe.

capitalism in Europe, noted that from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries we are confronted with two apparently contradictory phenomena: a large mass of unemployed persons and a great dearth of labour supply. In the Cape this paradox is not hard to solve. It was the absence of free labour as such that was at the root of a Grahamstown Journal correspondent's complaint, who wrote in 1833 that the "scarcity of labour is the cause of all our troubles".

The implications of Ordinance 49 were probably as far reaching as that of Ordinance 50 though the status of the former was for a long time dubious. MacMillan observes that "it was first and last a labour law intended to meet a need that was especially acute at the moment ... the Ordinance was an attempt to regulate the flow of labour".<sup>23</sup>

Of course the whole problem of labour scarcity was exacerbated by the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in the early 1830s. Now the question of the abolition of slavery at the Cape has been the subject of an ideological (supposedly historical) controversy connected with the Great Trek to which we have nothing to contribute. MacMillan and other liberal scholars tried to explain the Great Trek as a movement of the die-hard racists from a newly instituted egalitarian social order which threatened to undermine the very foundations of their view that all black people were descendants of Ham. That these people were racists cannot be denied,

---

<sup>23</sup>

MacMillan, W. M. op. cit. p. 88

and that they practised slavery beyond the borders also cannot be challenged seriously. However, the liberal Cape is something whose reality outside the heads of liberal historians has not been proved yet.

MacMillan and others can always retort that what is important and most relevant for historical study is that the Boers believed that such an order was being ushered in as a result of the machinations of the "negrophilists". Now this would raise very important theoretical-cum-methodological questions. But unfortunately, or rather fortunately, this is not their argument. At an earlier stage we showed how the Great Trek is used to demonstrate that the new order had come and by a process of circular inversion the new order is used as an explanation for the Trek.

For the right wing South African historians whose chief exponent is Theal, the record is the opposite. The Trek was an escape from oppression and insecurity. The question of slavery was only marginally relevant to the extent that the Boers were cheated when it came to the question of compensation. Hence "Everyone desired the total extinction of slavery upon reasonable terms but there was much diversity of view as to the manner in which it could best be effected". Also, "there was never an attempt in South Africa to defend the system in theory." What these statements are supposed to prove we do not know. All we know is that the figures are supposedly conclusive on this issue.

---

24

Theal, G. M. A History of Southern African, Vol. IV  
pp. 63, 67.

98% of those who left the Colony between 1836 and 1839 came from Graaff-Reinet, Uitenhage and the frontier districts, while only 16% of all the slaves in the Colony belonged to owners resident in these districts. The remaining 2% of the emigrants went from districts in which 28% of the slaves were to be found; and from the Cape Peninsula and Stellenbosch districts, in which 56% of all the slaves were owned, there was practically no emigration at all."<sup>25</sup>

The problem in trying to evaluate the assertions of these historians is that one never knows whether one is dealing with a genuine case of intellectual naivety or purely an elaborate attempt to prove an ideological position by resorting to figures. Now on van der Merwe's own reckoning the Boers who went to the frontier were the least prosperous and by the same token became the wildest of the whole lot. Now to a poor man the value of one slave is certainly worth a lot more than to the prosperous farmer. What we are saying here is not that the Great Trek was caused by the abolition of slavery but simply that the attempt to solve the whole question by producing a few statistics is as absurd as the spirit behind it.

In the section on slavery at the Cape we showed how slavery as a form of labour exploitation came to be the basis of labour relations as such in the early Cape. The following rather long quote of Janssens' observation drives the point home and shows how by the beginning of the last century the whole Cape economy had come to rely on chattel labour.

The abolition of slavery in South Africa would destroy all property and plunge the Colony into misery (perhaps for good). To stop recruiting slaves would also have the most disastrous consequences. The whole industry in this country is based on the existence of slaves.

---

<sup>25</sup>

Leyds, W. J. The First Annexation of the Transvaal, p.33.



Through a great many causes, which are too generally known to be enumerated here, mortality among them is incomparably greater than the rate of propagation. From the day that the importation of slaves would be stopped the number of workers would decrease and the price of others increase, by which agriculture and industry would suffer. One of the main causes of poverty here is the shortage of labour. Those who possess many slaves can easily be recognized by the condition of their farms; everything looks better and more prosperous than with those who have to work with scanty means. Even now the high price of all necessities of life, and also of slaves, has a harmful effect on the quantity and quality of products and their price. Whilst being convinced of the necessity to gradually diminish the number of slaves and in the end abolish them altogether, and whilst sincerely wishing to do so, it will be necessary to go on importing them as long as this is essential for the interests of society. There is no point in starting the work of demolition without having the means for a better construction.<sup>26</sup>

Janssens made his observations during the short spell under which the Cape was under Batavian rule. The truth is that by the 1830s the position had changed quite significantly. This does not mean that slavery had ceased to be the basis of Cape society. Indeed when it came to the question of passing Ordinance 19 which gave the slave the privilege of purchasing his freedom and that of his child, wife or brother; or if female, her husband, there was a general outcry and the Burgher Senate refused to proclaim the Ordinance in the usual manner. In fact it required firmness on the part of Lieutenant Governor General Bourke to have the law carried into execution. As late as 1831 William Wright observed that "many now receive their principal support from the labour, and some have actually no other means

---

<sup>26</sup>

Janssens, Governor, quoted in Idenburg, P. J. The Cape of Good Hope at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century.

Through a great many causes, which are too generally known to be enumerated here, mortality among them is incomparably greater than the rate of propagation. From the day that the importation of slaves would be stopped the number of workers would decrease and the price of others increase, by which agriculture and industry would suffer. One of the main causes of poverty here is the shortage of labour. Those who possess many slaves can easily be recognized by the condition of their farms; everything looks better and more prosperous than with those who have to work with scanty means. Even now the high price of all necessities of life, and also of slaves, has a harmful effect on the quantity and quality of products and their price. Whilst being convinced of the necessity to gradually diminish the number of slaves and in the end abolish them altogether, and whilst sincerely wishing to do so, it will be necessary to go on importing them as long as this is essential for the interests of society. There is no point in starting the work of demolition without having the means for a better construction.<sup>26</sup>

Janssens made his observations during the short spell under which the Cape was under Batavian rule. The truth is that by the 1830s the position had changed quite significantly. This does not mean that slavery had ceased to be the basis of Cape society. Indeed when it came to the question of passing Ordinance 19 which gave the slave the privilege of purchasing his freedom and that of his child, wife or brother; or if female, her husband, there was a general outcry and the Burgher Senate refused to proclaim the Ordinance in the usual manner. In fact it required firmness on the part of Lieutenant Governor General Bouché to have the law carried into execution. As late as 1831 he observed that "many now receive their principal labour, and some have actually no other means

quoted in Idenburg, P. J. The Cape of the Eighteenth Century.

Through a great many causes, which are too generally known to be enumerated here, mortality among them is incomparably greater than the rate of propagation. From the day that the importation of slaves would be stopped the number of workers would decrease and the price of others increase, by which agriculture and industry would suffer. One of the main causes of poverty here is the shortage of labour. Those who possess many slaves can easily be recognized by the condition of their farms; everything looks better and more prosperous than with those who have to work with scanty means. Even now the high price of all necessities of life, and also of slaves, has a harmful effect on the quantity and quality of products and their price. Whilst being convinced of the necessity to gradually diminish the number of slaves and in the end abolish them altogether, and whilst sincerely wishing to do so, it will be necessary to go on importing them as long as this is essential for the interests of society. There is no point in starting the work of demolition without having the means for a better construction.<sup>26</sup>

Janssens made his observations during the short spell under which the Cape was under Batavian rule. The truth is that by the 1830s the position had changed quite significantly. This does not mean that slavery had ceased to be the basis of Cape society. Indeed when it came to the question of passing Ordinance 19 which gave the slave the privilege of purchasing his freedom and that of his child, wife or brother; or if female, her husband, there was a general outcry and the Burgher Senate refused to proclaim the Ordinance in the usual manner. In fact it required firmness on the part of Lieutenant Governor General Bourke to have the law carried into execution. As late as 1831 William Wright observed that "many now receive their principal support from the labour, and some have actually no other means

---

26

Janssens, Governor, quoted in Idenburg, P. J. The Cape of Good Hope at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century.

of subsistence than what is derived from the hiring out of their slaves.<sup>27</sup>

Now the change in the situation was graphically summed up by a certain Mr. Miller, who, writing in the early 1830s maintained:

Suppose that emancipation were declared tomorrow, and that slavery were to cease forthwith, as long as a sufficient quantity of free labour can be procured at an expense equivalent to that incurred by slave labour, the master will suffer no loss by the change, for, wherein consists the value of the slave but in the value of his labour. Now I affirm that free labour is procurable in the colony at the lowest possible price; for at the moment in which I write, there are thousands and tens of thousands of natives in the frontiers, who are in a state of absolute starvation, and who are coming into the colony in such numbers to seek labour, at any wages, that the farmers in those districts are obliged to send them back. What is to prevent agriculturists, and others in need of labour all over the colony, from sending for those persons.<sup>28</sup>

William Wright added that

It may be argued that the colonists have not a sufficient return from their farms to enable them to maintain a considerable additional supply of labourers. But surely the emancipated slaves will naturally furnish the best class of agriculturists, if not harassed, as the Hottentots and the prize negroes formerly were by vexatious restrictions.<sup>29</sup>

The so-called prize negroes were Africans who were found on board captured slave ships, and brought to the colony to be 'apprenticed' under an Act of Parliament for a term not exceeding 14 years. During the time of service they received no wages and were hired out at high rates by their masters, who

---

<sup>27</sup> Wright, W. Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope, p.63

<sup>28</sup> Miller quoted in Wright, p.70

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. pp. 70-71

retained the profits. Not content with this, at the expiry of their term of service the masters devised a plan for enslaving the offspring of these chattels. A proclamation was published in May 1823 which stated that in consequence of serious losses sustained by the masters of female apprentices from the loss of labour during the period of pregnancy, it became necessary to compensate their masters by giving them the service of such black children as had been brought up in their service from infancy to five years of age, until those children had attained the age of 18 years, when they were to become free - that is, to be placed on the same footing with Khoi Khoi whose freedom was a farce.

From the above observations it will become evident why we expressed reservations about Genovese's attempt to make abolition a test case in determining how far deep rooted the institution of slavery was in any one society. Surely in our case the presence of this vast potential source of cheap labour if anything provided for better economies than slavery in its classical form. De Kock has noted that after 1834 there were no real structural changes in the South African economy due solely to abolition "because the economics of free coloured labour, as a type of labour, closely resembles that of slave labour".<sup>30</sup>

Merivale<sup>31</sup> divided the British slave colonies at the time of emancipation into three classes according to their economic situation. First, the oldest settlements, established in the smaller Antilles, Barbados and Antigua, etc., in short

---

<sup>30</sup> De Kock, M. H. The Economic Development of South Africa, p.37

<sup>31</sup> Merivale, H. Colonization and Colonies, pp. 313-317.

those in which the land was nearly all occupied.

They were less injured than any other by the immediate effect of emancipation, for the negroes had no resource except in continuing to work, there was no unoccupied land for them to possess, no independent mode of obtaining a subsistence to which they could resort, still less of obtaining those luxuries which habit had rendered desirable to them.

The next class in Merivale's scheme were those in which the fertile or advantageously situated soil was all cultivated, and becoming exhausted; but there remained much unoccupied soil of a less valuable description and quality and the population was not dense in relation to the whole surface, e.g. Jamaica.

here the colonists were injured perhaps, by the abolition of the slave trade; and they suffer now, since emancipation, by the difficulty of compelling the negroes to perform hired labour while they have their own provision of goods, and other resources at their disposal.

Finally there were places like Mauritius, Trinidad and Guiana in which either the fertility of the cultivated soil was as yet inexhausted or abundance of fertile unoccupied land. Here

the negroes have found it easy to obtain a subsistence in a country overflowing with natural wealth; they have been rescued from servitude involving, perhaps, a greater amount of labour than in any other settlements: they have abundance of land to resort to for their maintenance. The accounts, both from Guiana and Trinidad, seem to report the negroes as generally peaceful and well-inclined, but indisposed to labour, to which they can only be tempted by the most exorbitant offers of wages.

Now at the Cape the Act of emancipation had allowed an apprenticeship for four years during which period the emancipated slaves were still under obligation to serve their former masters for wages. The 1st of December 1838 witnessed the complete freedom (at least theoretically) of all the slave and

indentured classes in the colony. On that day, according to Judge Cloete, the former slave owners saw

The whole of their farming pursuits and plans destroyed, no bribe, nor entreaty, did avail in one single instance to induce anyone of those ~~now~~ free persons to stay over that day. In some cases remunerative wages were offered, but in the Eastern country districts this was impossible, and the agriculturists there found themselves totally deprived of every vestige of labour to improve or cultivate their farms, or even to superintend or herd their flocks.<sup>32</sup>

So much for the mildness of Cape slavery and the non-importance of slave labour for the frontier farmers, though it must be added that Judge Cloete had himself lost quite heavily as a result of emancipation so his testimony has to be treated with a lot of caution.

Many of the liberated slaves migrated to the villages and to Cape Town where an outbreak of measles in 1839, and of small pox in 1840, carried off a considerable number of them. In the short run there was then some major dislocation in the economy of the Cape as a result of emancipation. The settlers complained about lack of protection against "the negroes turned loose upon the country".

The abolition of slavery led to the merging of Khoi Khoi groups with the former slaves to form the present Cape Coloured population. What would have happened to this group in the absence of the African nations must remain a matter of empty speculation. The fact that they are a mixed race itself cannot settle the issue either way, but it is very doubtful that the rigid lines that have become almost synonymous with the name South

---

32

Cloete quoted in De Kock, M. H. Selected Subjects in the Economic History of South Africa, P. 93

Africa would have developed in their present extreme form. No doubt the Coloured population would by and large be at the bottom of the scale but this does not mean that the pattern of race relations would have been the same. Incidentally, the case of the Cape Coloureds is in fact critical for the pluralist approach insofar as the latter concentrates purely on cultural attributes. By the same token they are a critical case for the Charles Wagley-Marvin Harris<sup>33</sup> category of cultural preparedness. We shall return to these questions at a later stage.

MacMillan has made the extremely salient remark that "the natural tendency has been to interpret the course of history almost exclusively as it affected the fortunes of the white colonists." This problem cannot be easily solved since almost all the records that are available reflect the view of the settlers or missionaries and officials or their view of what they thought the Africans thought. We have noted already how the presence of traders and missionaries generated new needs amongst the Africans. In fact there is sufficient evidence to indicate that one of the strategies adopted by some African groups when they found it difficult to obtain guns was to invite more missionaries and traders in order to obtain them. In the officially approved fairs we learn that the Africans brought elephant tusks, corn, gum, mats, baskets, hides and skins while they bought beads, buttons, blankets, pots, brass and tinware. The exchange rates of all these articles would be very difficult to figure out, and as in the case of the Khoi Khoi bartering

---

33

Wagley, C. and Harris, M. Minorities in the New World



cattle for beads, colonial transactions defy all analysis in terms of market rationality.

The changes introduced by the traders and missionaries would have undermined certain aspects of traditional African society no doubt but the process would have been gradual. Moreover some of the innovations would have been adapted to suit the new conditions and thereby incorporated without a major dislocation in the old society. A good example in this respect is the persistence of African religious beliefs and practices amongst Christians and how these survive as a subculture to the extent that the Gospel designates them as heathenish. However, by the very nature of the case the frontier is an area of conflict and cataclysmic conflict at that. One of the main strategies for the settlers was to break the hold that traditional social formations had on his potential source of labour.

Now the tendency to fragmentation inherent in Xhosa political succession patterns provided a good ground for the standard settler device of playing the indigenous groups against each other. In the Cape this had worked extremely well with the Khoi Khoi with their Chiefs ousting each other to get settler recognition. The object is not only conquest but also control and the African must enter white society as a virtual chattel which brings us face to face with the peculiar nature of colonial patterns of stratification.

Now we have seen how the whole Xhosa political system revolved around the institution of chieftainship and how the question of land was intertwined with the political system. It will be evident how the whole system was bound to lose its power if the Chief became the foreigners' vassal and could neither provide protection nor land. No doubt the influence of the missionaries also has to be examined critically from this angle.

By adopting Ngqika as their Chief with whom they could sign treaties and come to certain agreements about land and other national issues which were supposed to be binding for all the Xhosas the whites were in effect undermining the whole basis of the Xhosa political order.

The essence of the racially stratified society is that members of the subordinate group should have entered the society as rightless chattels and that this structure of intergroup relations perpetuates itself even if there are radical changes within the economic order. To the extent that some sections of the indigenous group can maintain a measure of independence economically, political mechanisms have to be devised in order to exercise complete control over them. To the extent that some of them acquire cultural attributes that belong to the colonists they present a problem for the original conqueror/conquered, civilized man/savage, christian/pagan dichotomy. Here we can see the interplay of political, economic and ideological factors leading to particular class formations and modes of group consciousness.

Sir Kufane Donkin the acting Governor who renewed the institution of fairs on the eastern frontier said that his ambition was "to transform the Kaffirs from a thieving nation into a commercial one". The fairs were a foundation for this transformation. So much for the civilizing effects of trade. As early as 1837 a report from the mission station at Bethelsdorp complained, not only of poor crops and high prices, but also that "there has not been the same demand for labourers as formerly, a great number of Fingos having come into the

Colony who are employed at lower wages than those usually given to Hottentots".<sup>34</sup> Now we shall take a look at the role of the Fingos in the frontier encounter but first we have to pursue the point about their undercutting Khoi Khoi wages.

To assess the money value of Hottentot wages is almost impossible. Shops were few and far in between, purchases, if they could afford any, reached the servant through the farmer, and the servant was probably seldom out of some master's debt and, like the Boers themselves, rarely handled cash. The fact would seem to be that Hottentot wages were as low as it was possible for adverse conditions to make them. Even as slaves they might have fared better. They were involved in a vicious circle. History had made them a vagrant landless race, and the law which sought to check this vagrancy failed to provide land, or any 'reserves' more adequate than the handful of farms called institutions. Passes, indeed, the principal check on vagrancy, did little but sanction forced labour, for in the last resort the Hottentot who refused to work for what he considered inadequate payment came under the pass law, and as a vagrant, was liable to be contracted by the local authorities to anyone they pleased, on the farmer's own terms. These terms in turn were so miserable that Hottentots continued to prefer the risk of vagrancy.<sup>35</sup>

This rather long quote from MacMillan sums up the position fairly well. Other estimates of Khoi Khoi wages based on London Missionary Society stations' returns indicate some regional variations. Cape Town and Stellenbosch 8s. to 12s. Swellendam 4s. 6d. to 8s.; George 4s. 6d. to 7s. 6d.; Uitenhage average 6s.; Albany average 10s. Before the influx of Fingos into the Colony the wage structure for the Xhosas employed by the farmers was already quite unattractive. Mrs. Gardner an old frontier dweller giving evidence on African labour employed by the farmers, stated that "they were generally paid for their

---

<sup>34</sup> MacMillan, W. M. The Cape Colour Question, p. 253

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 169.

services in beads, brass-ware and brass plates and sometimes articles of clothing. They occasionally served for cattle, but not often, as the above articles enabled them to purchase cattle more cheaply in their own country". So in fact the precursors of present day compound labour are not to be sought only in what was euphemistically called apprenticeship in the last century but in the whole structure of labour relations as such, just as it is the case today that the mines are a most handy example of the phenomenon of black labour in an advanced colonial capitalist society.

Dr. Philip, after touring the frontier in 1830 wrote that

Such is the system that is now followed, that I can see nothing before the Caffres but slavery or extermination (extrusion from their lands) if they are not educated. Education would teach them that their true interest is to be at peace with the colony and the folly of resistance, raise them above stealing, and fit them for coming under colonial Government. Such as have been at the mission stations prefer the government of the Colony to that of the Chiefs. Many are now leaving Lovedale and the Chumie to settle in the neutral territory and among the farmers ... Their country is already courted. There are numbers of rapacious individuals who have set their hearts upon it.

Slander and defamation, and the injuries done them by the colonist, have already done their work, and their slanderers are now waiting on an opportunity to excite a quarrel that will furnish a pretext to the Government to drive them from their lands, when they hope to share their cattle and their land. In such a Colony there are numbers of toadeaters, civil servants who want estates. These men are on the very borders, from them the Government secures all its information respecting the Caffres, and they are incessant in their exertions to accomplish their objectives. Frontier Boers, Field Cornets, magistrates, friends of magistrates, want new grants of land, and these grants must

be taken from the Caffres.<sup>36</sup>

There is no doubt about the fact that Philip had a firm grasp of the frontier processes and indeed this is the chief reason why his name is an anathema to those who prefer to interpret history as a series of myths which are presented as facts. However, the point we wish to take up is the one that relates to the solution of the problem from the point of view of the Africans. He believed that education would teach them that their interest was peace with the Colony and would also make them fit for incorporation into white society. We shall follow the fortunes of a group which in a way followed the path suggested by Philip and whose destiny is critical in determining the interplay of class, culture, and race in the colonial conquest drama.

Already we have noted how the colonists succeeded in playing one group against the other and coming to the aid of their vassals in case of war (1818 war between Ngqika and Ndlambe). Another piece of colonizing genius was how D'urban in collaboration with the Wesleyan missionaries exploited the subordinate status of the Fingos and used them as a pawn in the conquest of the Xhosa. The special position of this group lies in the fact that they managed to use their position of being traitors to accumulate a considerable amount of wealth when their fellow countrymen were being dispossessed, as well as acquire the culture of the colonists fairly rapidly. Also, their case is critical for theories that stress the importance of military alliances as integrating

mechanisms between groups of different racial stock.

The Fingos were refugees, mostly from the Hlubi, Bhele, and Zizi chiefdoms of Natal, who arrived in Xhosa country from about 1822 onwards. John Ross talked to a Zizi in the Tyhume in 1824 who had been driven from his home by war seven years before, and in 1825 these marauders defeated the Thembu near Hangklip, west of the White Kei. In language and custom they were close to the Xhosa, and they attached themselves in the customary way to wealthy men as clients. They occupied a subordinate position in Xhosa chiefdoms, but certainly were not slaves when, at the close of the Frontier War of 1835-6, 17,000 of them crossed the Kei at the invitation of the governor and were established in the colony.

In their wanderings the Fingos had obviously learnt quite a lot about the art of survival. Even when they were living among the Xhosas they developed traits usually associated with Jews in racial stereotypes. In fact the designation pariah group would seem fairly accurate for them. Besides being to some extent a scapegoat - "if a man or a beast died, a Fingo was often accused of causing the death by witchcraft (which included holding nightly intercourse with wolves!)" - they were also good pedlars.

In order to acquire cattle, the Fingos grew tobacco, and prepared it with great care. Under the pretence of visiting a relative living at a distance, where they knew tobacco was in demand, they would form a party and start like so many pedlars carrying small baskets of tobacco on their heads. When they arrived at their journey's end, they bartered the tobacco for cattle.

They placed the cows thus obtained in glens and kloofs where they were not being noticed by the Gcalekas. When the cows were old, they were sold to the trader in exchange for beads, cooking pots, spades and hoes. These articles they did not use, but reserved them for barter with other tribes for cattle ... Sometimes, etc.

they travelled a hundred miles for the purpose of trade.<sup>37</sup>

Towards the end of the century the settlers in the Oudtshoorn district were seeking effective means of exposing and combating

the usurious practices of feather pedlars, frequently German, Polish, or Russian Jews of a low type, who swarm about the country as feather buyers. Their method of work is to bewilder the ignorant and imperfectly educated farmers by offering them ready cash, of which they often stand much in need.<sup>38</sup>

They had also become the darlings of the missionaries (Wesleyans) and acted not only as messenger boys to and from the Colony but also as spies against the Gcaleka for the missionaries. Thus from an early stage because of a combination of historical circumstances they took to the Bible. In the colonies the Bible more often than not is the only access to any form of education. They fought with the settlers against the Xhosa in the wars of 1846 and 1850. Not only were they given the spoils of conquest, between 1857 and 1867 while other Africans had to carry passes to enter the Colony these subjects of the Queen were not required to carry passes, instead they had 'Certificates of Citizenship'. In institutions of learning their numbers were certainly higher than those of the Xhosas. In 1877 they built their own training center at Elythswood. They had long been excommunicated from the Xhosa nation hence the prophetess whose message led to the Cattle Killing tragedy had no message for them. In 1877 a war broke out between the Gcalekas and the Fingos and the whites helped the Fingos.

The Grahamstown Journal said that it was clear that the influence of Christianity among the Fingos had been helpful to peace. The Gcalekas, who had resisted the Christian teacher,

<sup>37</sup> Lyllie, J. and Whiteside, J. History of the Abambo, p. 19

<sup>38</sup> Hurston, The Cape Colony for the Settler, p. 20

and the Ngqikas, who had a strong passion for drink had caused all the trouble. Heathen Fingos for a brief period had hesitated on which side to declare themselves; but the Christian Fingos had held them back, had been constantly loyal, and had fought well by the side of the European troops and Volunteers. As a result of general unrest among the conquered African population in 1878 in South Africa the Cape Parliament passed what was called the 'Peace Preservation Act' which prescribed stringent measures for the control of fire-arms among the Africans. In 1879 the Fingos were disarmed and their complaint was "We are disarmed because our colour is black, if we have been disloyal, say right out when and where we have so acted; but if we have served the Government faithfully we ought to keep our guns".<sup>39</sup>

It is extremely difficult to conceptualize the kind of society that emerged as a result of the frontier confrontations and the final conquest of the Africans. However, it is important that we understand the nature of the social order that existed before the take-off as a result of the mineral discoveries. We have seen how a combination of various forces served to undermine the traditional social order and how in the final analysis it was the factor of military strength that sealed the destiny of all the indigenous groups. We must however, note that the process of conquest took different forms on various fronts and that for instance among the Zulu it was not completed till early this century. Hitherto we have been

---

<sup>39</sup>

Ayliff, J. and Whiteside, J. op. cit. p. 72.



stressing the importance of the colonial aspect of inter-group relations in South Africa. In fact this is a dichotomous model of society essentially, there may be marginal groups but the main contradiction is that between colonizer and colonized. That is to say, the conqueror is at once white, Christian and regards himself as the embodiment of civilization while the conquered is black, pagan or animist, and regards his own way of life as superior.

Now while the cultural dimension is not permanent, and indeed after conquest the traditional order is ruined, the racial aspect only makes sense in terms of buttressing the original conqueror/conquered or colonizer/colonized dichotomy. It will be obvious that culturally marginal groups and racially marginal ones (the two do not always coincide) upset this classification. Further, conquest is both a political and an economic process. Now to the extent that the colonizers grab all the land and reduce the colonized to the status of chattels or even just free workers our original dichotomous scheme is not upset by the economic class aspect.

However, in reality the position is more complex than this. While the main feature of colonialism is in fact economic dispossession it is also the case that a considerable section of the indigenous population will still own pieces of land albeit the poorest and because of over-population and overstocking will tend to progressively deteriorate. On the white side we already note the phenomenon of what were called 'bywoners' which means that there existed more than one mode of relationship to land. Further, because of the activities of groups of a secondary colonial nature like missionaries there will appear among the colonized a culture continuum and groups who do not have to earn their living by necessarily labouring for white

masters. It will be clear that simplistic schemes cannot cope with this reality. The nearest conceptualization of this pre-industrial order which we can suggest is that of a colonial ethnic estate system.

CHAPTER FIVECONQUEST AND LABOUR EXPLOITATION IN THE BOER  
REPUBLICS AND NATAL

South African historians all agree that the patterns of race relations that emerged in the Boer Republics were much more rigid than those at the Cape and Natal. After all, the whole thesis relating to the frontier versus Cape liberalism is an elaboration of this view. The reasons for this difference are usually located in the absence of 'countervailing' forces like the missionary intervention and the restraining hand of British liberalism. Indeed there is a sense in which the encounter between the Boers and the Africans in the northern provinces can be viewed as an example of pure colonial conquest without the institutional fetters (political, legal, and religious) that characterized the earlier encounters with the Koi people (restrictions imposed by the Dutch East India Company) and the Xhosas (missionary interference and British government prescriptions). This factor, coupled with the fanatic primitive calvinism of the Boers would seem to suggest some measure of validity (in a different context) in the thesis propounded by theorists like Tannenbaum and Freyre who have stressed the importance of institutional factors whether they be legal or religious.

If we accept the 'liberal' explanation of the Boer trek as presented for example by MacMillan, namely, that the Boers were running away from a new semi-egalitarian social order that was being ushered in at the Cape in order to continue slavery without interference from the missionaries and the British everything seems to fall into its proper place.

Some other historians have pointed out that each of the major complaints the trekkers advanced as reasons

for their leaving the Cape was in some way connected with the race question - the issue of the emancipation of the slaves; the thorny question of the status of the Khoi Khoi; the problem of the relations with the Xhosas. Indeed Anna Steenkamp's<sup>1</sup> statement to the effect that her people asserted not so much the emancipation of the slaves as their being put on an equal footing with the Christians has been taken as the affirmation of both the liberal thesis (that there was some measure of racial equality at the Cape) and the right wing version which asserts that the Boers were never against the emancipation of the slaves; all they were worried about were factors like compensation and preserving their culture from the pagan invasion.

In this Chapter we shall try to examine the kind of social order which the rigid form of racism as an ideology of domination helped to bring about as well as buttress. It will be clear already that the view of the relationship between social structure and ideology taken here is not a simplistic cause and effect one. Indeed the racism of the Boers had its historical origins in the encounters with the Khoi Khoi, the San and the Xhosas plus the factor of the exploitation of unfree coloured labour. We shall also examine the forms of exploitation that emerged in Natal under the direction of Sir Theophilus Shepstone.

Agar-Hamilton, in an attempt to defend the establishment of the colour-bar as a principle in the constitution of the Boer republic argues that there was some justification for this practice. He writes

---

<sup>1</sup> Steenkamp, L. S. ed. The diary of Anna Steenkamp and fragments on the Great Trek.

Its differentiation was not based on a mere aesthetic preference for creamy pink to brownish black. At bottom it was a test of civilization. The white race, anxious to preserve its own peculiar culture, was compelled to exclude from its society anything that might possibly confuse it with surrounding barbarism. Of this, colour was a rough and ready test.<sup>2</sup>

In the above passage the author dismisses the notion of the decisiveness of the somatic norm image (Hoetink) and advances an explanation that is more in line with the cultural pluralism which is the subject of Hoetink's illuminating critique. One might summarily dismiss Agar-Hamilton's thesis by just observing that the Boers had no civilization to boast of or to defend for that matter and that people who want to preserve their civilization (as distinct from spreading it) stay at home. However, this would be to miss the point. The fact is that the importance of cultural differences especially during the initial stage of contact cannot be denied. Nonetheless it is a fallacy to account for Boer racism in terms of cultural differences. In fact it is an interesting paradox that the same authors who stress the absence of racism in the early Cape are the exponents of the thesis that racism is nothing more than exclusion on cultural grounds.

The first point that has to be made relates to the whole notion of exclusion. A blanket use of this concept can be very misleading. Efficient though the whites have always been (both Dutch and British in South Africa) in expelling indigenous peoples from their lands it is not true that they have always sought to exclude them from their society. Here the

---

<sup>2</sup>

Agar-Hamilton, The Native Policy of the Voortrekkers p.88

analyst must distinguish the granting or refusal of what are generally regarded as citizenship rights on the one hand, and exclusion from economic life on the other hand. Citizenship rights have to do with the decision making process in all societies whether it be in a Greek polis or an African inkundla or a western capitalist society. Once we have stated this distinction in its clearest form it becomes obvious that the dilemma of the settler lies in the desire to dispossess the indigenous group and exclude him from all meaningful political and social participation while at the same time incorporating him in his economy as a chattel.

Livingstone explained the Boer trek in the following terms: The great objection the Boers had, and will have to English law is that it makes no difference between black and white; they felt aggrieved at their supposed losses in the emancipation of their slaves and determined to erect themselves into a republic in which they might pursue without molestation the proper treatment of blacks. It is almost needless to add that the proper treatment has always contained in it the essential element of slavery, namely, compulsory, unpaid labour.<sup>3</sup>

In examining the various forms of unfree labour in the Boer republics we have in mind Nieboer's theory that the notion of free labour is not structurally compatible with the phenomenon of 'open resources', that is, to the extent that conquered people can eke out an existence, albeit a miserable one, independently of the conquerors some coercive means have

---

<sup>3</sup> Livingstone, Dr. Missionary Travels in South Africa, p. 29.

to be devised in order to compel them to labour for the masters. Gumplowicz, discussing the problem of the formation of the state as a result of conquest, asserts that the conquering minority aspires to live in better circumstances with the services of the subject majority than it could do without them. "The result is a common industrial enterprise conducted under compulsion in which the greater burden, all the unfree service, falls upon the subject class ... Thus compulsory labour is organized through the organization of sovereignty and the whole body of rights."<sup>4</sup>

For purposes of clarity we propose to classify the forms of forced labour on which the economy of the Boers depended into three broad categories, namely, apprenticeship; tribute in the form of the so-called labour tax; and outright slavery. While we have made this separation between these three forms it will be clear after we have analysed them that they are all inextricably bound together and that all belong to the category of domination which Franz Oppenheimer<sup>5</sup> described as sharing one essential feature, namely, the satisfaction of economic needs by political means.

In attempting to analyse the forms of forced labour that prevailed in the Boer republics we encounter certain problems that are peculiar to historical sociology. The more general problem in trying to interpret history with the aid of sociological concepts is that of the validity of the historical material that one is dealing with. We noted in Chapter One that in a society in which group identities thrive on myths the line

---

<sup>4</sup> Gumplowicz, Outlines of Sociology, p. 198

<sup>5</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, The State.

between ideology and historical fact becomes extremely difficult to draw. South African history, by and large has been written from the point of view of the settler minority. Thus it is by piecing together accounts by settlers, missionaries, traders and travellers that one gets a picture of the historical reality.

More specifically, in examining slavery in the Boer republics this problem is made more intractable by the fact that slavery as an institution had been outlawed by the time of the appearance of these Boer republics hence the Boers knew that the practice of enslaving Africans openly could serve as a pretext for British intervention and the loss of their much-prized independence. So it is not surprising that the practice of slavery was in fact couched in very euphemistic terminology and also accompanied by blatant denials. The problem for the analyst is to make sense of these conflicting tendencies relating to theory and practice.

As stated earlier the whole history of the settler expansion was characterised by the enslavement or subjugation of various black groups. Indeed the so-called apprenticeship was one of the main features in the Boer struggle against the San. The expeditions that were sent out to exterminate them captured the children for the purpose of apprenticing them to the settlers. Further, this practice was not restricted to dealings with the San. In 1893 a Placaat issued by Janssens stated that "all kaffir children whether they had been captured in war or not had to be returned to the kraals".

Emancipation had been one of the reasons for the Boer trek (views to the contrary notwithstanding). In examining the attitude of the Boers to the African people whom they encountered there are two apparently irreconcilable declared



motives. One is that put forward by Commandant Scholtz and General Pretorius to a crowded court in Rustenburg, namely,

that they had the same divine authority as Joshua when commissioned to destroy all the enemies of Israel in the land of Canaan.

The other is the one articulated in defence of the so-called apprenticeship, namely that "from motives of humanity they apprenticed and exercised a paternal supervision over destitute kaffir children." The two views become intelligible as part of a single coherent world view if we ask the question as to how the children had become destitute in the first place.

In this connection F. W. Chesson writing to Fowler and Buxton in 1868 asserted that

..They do not tell us who make the children destitute, who send out commandos for the express purpose of killing the parents in order to steal the offspring, who fix the price of the 'black ivory' according to 'the weight of the tusk...' they create the misery which they profess to alleviate, and I assert without fear of disproof that the commandos are organized for the express purpose of capturing children to be converted to slaves and that in all parts of the republic a traffic in these human chattels is briskly carried on, the prices usually varying from twelve to twenty pounds per head.<sup>6</sup>

In a similar vein G. W. Steyn, formerly Larddrost of Potchefstroom wrote in the 'The Friend of the Free State' of March 13th 1866:

You have already been made aware that the loads of 'black ivory' (young kaffirs) are constantly hawked about the country, and disposed of like so many droves of cattle... I challenge President Pretorius to prove that the several young natives he has in his service are orphans, or that one fifth of the (at least) 4000 natives sold here

---

<sup>6</sup>

F. W. Chesson, The Dutch Republics of South Africa (Three letters to R. N. Fowler and Buxton 1868), p.17

during the last fifteen years are such, unless they have been deprived of their fathers and perhaps mothers also by the bullet of some ruffian Boer. Will President Pretorius dare to deny that such is the manner in which hundreds of helpless children are annually made orphans for the sole purpose of benefitting the pockets of some miscreants? It is often asserted that all these acts of woe are done to civilize the natives, and only amount to the apprenticing of orphan children until they are twenty five years old. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that the hundreds of natives annually sold are all orphans, how are these children to know when they are twenty five years old? and the means by which they may seek and obtain their freedom? Their twenty five is seldom if ever completed till death relieves them from the bond of slavery. Call it what you will, it is slavery by compulsory labour and compulsory detention. President Pretorius belongs to a self-called religious people, and he agrees with them in looking on the dark-skinned races as the accursed sons of Ham, who only deserve the name schepsels, and who are doomed by heaven to perpetual servitude. It is their opinion that by inflicting slavery on the natives they are perpetuating the will of God.<sup>7</sup>

Chapman making the same point about slavery observed:

The Boers from time to time organized against them (natives) commandos, as they are termed, being levies in arms of all the able-bodied men under the command of the field cornet of the district. It was easy work for these men, well-mounted, used to hardships in their hunting expeditions, and expert in the use of fire arms, to carry devastation wherever they went. The cattle were swept off, village burnt, the inhabitants massacred, and what was perhaps the worst feature in the case, the women and children, and often the men, were dragged away to become forced labourers - in fact slaves on the Dutchmen's farms ... The Boers also purchase many native children, who with those captured in their wars with the tribes, remain in a condition of slavery until released by death. I have many of these unfortunate beings offered me, either in exchange for a horse, a quantity<sup>8</sup> of merchandise, or in liquidation of a debt ....

<sup>7</sup>G. W. Steyn, Quoted in Chesson p. 17.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. p. 29

There is enough evidence to suggest that the Boers acted in collaboration with the Portuguese in their slave dealings. At this point slavery in the Portuguese empire was still legal. A local Transvaal newspaper called 'Die Republikein' admitted without suggesting Government approval of the practice that the slave trade was

fast becoming a lucrative branch of commerce, and that whole waggon loads of children are being continually hawked about the country, the majority of which are procured from Zoutpansberg, where several men have for years made it a regular trade, most of these children being bought by them from the natives at low prices who kidnap, and often in less merciful manner obtain them from tribes in the hunting veld; and small parties of natives are even fitted out with goods and sent down as far as Delagoa bay to traffic for 'black ivory'<sup>9</sup>

Of course these practices were denied by the Boer Governments and sanctions were brought to bear on those who condemned them. Steyn, for example, was threatened with banishment by Pretorius "for corresponding with foreign powers about political matters". In fact the practice of apprenticeship (inboeking) was recognized by law in the republics, however, any suggestion that it was a disguised form of slavery was regarded as a smear by the Boers. It would appear that present day euphemisms for racial oppression and exploitation like separate development have some historical precedents in apprenticeship. We would also note that there was a minority within the republics which opposed the enslavement of African children.

Already it will be clear that our analytical distinction between the so-called apprenticeship and outright slavery in practice becomes extremely tenuous not unless one chooses to accept Boer rationalizations instead of objective

analysis. Such a theorist, among others, is Agar Hamilton who maintains that in its early days the system was not necessarily cruel in working or detrimental to the 'apprentice' and cites the Methodist missionary and friend of the trekkers who defended the system in the Grahamstown Journal in September 1841 in the following terms:

The natives who are very numerous interspersed in villages among the emigrants are a perfectly free people, and not the slaves we were some time ago led to suppose them. The principles of freedom have been proclaimed throughout the whole emigration, and those orphans who by war have fallen into their hands are regularly indentured to respectable men, who must possess some reasonable probability of being able to fulfil the terms of the indenture.<sup>10</sup>

If one rejects these strictures as just another case of ideology dressed up as fact there still remains the sociological task of analysing this apprenticeship as a form of child slavery and distinguishing it as a form of forced labour from the usual connotation of the concept in economic history and sociology.

H. M. Robertson after noting that the practice of apprenticeship gave rise to charges of slavery by missionaries and British officials observes that "although it was cheap labour rather than support any technical instruction for the apprentice, it was not the invention of the Boers for maintaining child slavery." Instead

Parish apprentices, children often of very tender years, had long been farmed out to employers by the overseers of the poor in the English parishes from the foundlings, orphans and pauper children in their charge,

---

10

Agar-Hamilton op cit. p. 173.

a practice which only died out in the nineteenth century, and practices of a similar nature were known throughout the continent of Europe.<sup>11</sup>

Robertson's remarks are extremely salient because by drawing our attention to similar practices elsewhere he invites a comparative analysis of social structures. If a case can be made for arguing that the kind of forced labour institutions that we encounter in the colonial setting had precedents in European historical development our thesis about the essential peculiarity of colonial structures would surely need some revision. This general proposition will become very important when we examine the nature of the capitalistic industrial development of the South African economy and its relationship to the entire structuring of inter-group relations in present day South Africa.

In attempting to disentangle the myths surrounding the whole institution of apprenticeship in South Africa there are two preliminary points that have to be made which can be viewed as clarifying the problem. The first one is the attempt by the settlers to rationalize and justify the practice and thereby distort and conceal its true nature and significance as a system of forced labour. The second is the tendency by historians to confuse and mystify the issue by pointing to apparent precedents without attempting to examine the total setting in which the said phenomenon occurs. It is important that these two sets of mystifications should be analyzed separately. We are here specifically concerned with the problems relating to the mystification of the second order.

---

11

"150 Years of Economic Contact between Black and White."  
Journal of South African Economy 1934, p. 408.

Paul Douglas defines apprenticeship as

a method of passing on acquired trade skills and of maintaining a supply of craftsmen. It is a mutual relationship under which a novice, who is generally a minor, is taught the art of a trade by one who is engaged to it. The apprentice in return pays either in whole or in part for this instruction by work on objects destined for consumption or sale by the master.<sup>12</sup>

Such a broad definition of the concept of apprenticeship, by accentuating its chief general characteristics justifies the application of the concept on a more or less universal scale. Indeed historical evidence shows that apprenticeship was an integral part of systems of industry in ancient Babylon; Egypt; Greece; Rome; the Orient etc.

In the context of the development of western European societies the concept of apprenticeship is anchored in the system of the medieval guilds. In this connection Eugene Schneider has pointed out that

the relation between master and apprentice involved certain definite rights and obligations on the part of both. The primary obligation of the master was to train the apprentice in the skills of the craft so that he could some day qualify as a journeyman or a master. In addition the master usually agreed to provide the apprentice 'bed and board' and the other necessities of life; sometimes schooling was provided and even a small salary. The master had a right to discipline him, and in general was responsible for his good conduct much as if the relationship were that of father to son. On his side the apprentice owed certain duties to his master obedience, self-control, loyalty, honesty, good conduct. In some cases he could not even marry without the consent of the master. However, he had the right to leave the master if he could prove that the conditions of the apprenticeship were not being met.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Paul Douglas, Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences Vol. 1-11 p.144

<sup>13</sup> Schneider, Eugene, Industrial Sociology, p.36

It would seem that any fruitful comparative undertaking would have to distinguish apprenticeship in its more or less ideal-typical form as it existed in the guild system from yet another version which generally goes under the title 'Parish apprenticeship'. Finally both types have to be distinguished from the exploitation of child labour (mainly unskilled) during the era of the factory as the typical production unit. Now while all these types of apprenticeship have identical features it would seem that lumping them together under one description or category would tend to confuse the subject and thus stifle meaningful comparison.

An analysis of the various forms of apprenticeship shows that what happened in the South African Boer republics, strictly speaking, had no parallel in European apprenticeship systems though it strongly resembled the harsh forms of child labour exploitation embodied in the concept of Parish apprenticeship and the exploitation of children under the factory system. We shall return to this problem in our concluding section. First we have to examine the nature of the master-apprentice relation within the context of the guild.

We have already drawn attention, by citing Schneider's observation, to the mutuality of the tie between master and apprentice in the context of the guilds. We shall now extend the analysis in order to understand the nature of the whole institution. Of course the specific problem in which we are interested is whether there is a sense in which apprenticeship could be regarded as a version of forced child labour.

The first important characteristic of the medieval apprenticeship system is that the relations between master and apprentice were governed and supervised by a larger body, namely, the guild. Because of the control that the guild had over its members the relations between apprentice and master were not purely personal relations in the sense of there being no authority over the master. As to the reason why the guilds exercised this control Dunlop and Denman have pointed out that by regulating the work of children the guild could protect its members from the competition of cheaper labour. Secondly, their supervision ensured that the rising generation of workmen were properly taught, and consequently likely to maintain the guild's reputation for sound work which enabled it to command a market.

More important for our comparative purposes is the fact that

later on, when the guilds had grown in wealth and reputation, and industry had become more remunerative, guild membership, or as it was called, freedom, was greatly coveted, and the guilds, by governing the apprentices and by making training compulsory were able to keep down the number of workmen, and so reserve the trade of the town to members and members' sons, and protect them from serious competition.<sup>14</sup>

It is also interesting to note that the towns either willingly gave support to the guilds or themselves supervised apprentices. At the early stage of the development of apprenticeship it was a voluntary and local institution and rested only upon guild authority. However, gradually it became nationalized and uniform regulations were enforced thus undermining the local

---

<sup>14</sup>

Dunlop, J. O. & Denman, R. English Apprenticeship and Child Labour. pp. 28-29



variations which were a feature of the early system. Also, by the fifteenth century, say in England, facing more competition the guildsmen had become jealous of their privileges, and in their hands apprenticeship had become a powerful weapon for enforcing and preserving the industrial monopoly of the guilds.

What is interesting for our purposes is that far from being a form of forced labour, apprenticeship as it existed within the guild system was a privilege. As a rule the apprentices came from the same social class as their masters and if one were to conceptualize the relationship between master and apprentice the nearest description would be that the master stood more or less 'in loco parentis' to the apprentice. Still more significant is the fact that the relations between them were supervised by the guild. Further, after the youth had served his term of apprenticeship he would himself become a journeyman and then a master.

It will be clear that the version of apprenticeship we have sketched above in ideal typical form could not be viewed as structurally compatible with a form of economic organisation that was founded purely on capitalistic lines. Historical evidence supports this proposition since it shows that it was in the industries that became capitalized early that apprenticeship was first abandoned. The transition from apprenticeship as we have described it to the exploitation of cheap child labour is probably historically marked by the adoption of the 'outdoor system' which meant that instead of providing for the apprentice as in the old days the master paid him a small wage. This may seem paradoxical in view of the usual association of any form of wage labour with some degree of freedom.

However, it was not only the factor of the 'outdoor' arrangement that mattered since it was itself symptomatic of an underlying structural change in the system of production that resulted in the transformation of what had been close personal relationships between masters and apprentices into commercial arrangements between employers and their hands. The small workrooms with their five or six workmen were being replaced by larger establishments employing something in the vicinity of forty workers. It is clear that for reasons of sheer scale the indoor system could not have coped with this new method of production.

Capitalistic organization of industry was inimical to apprenticeship, and the speeding up in the growth of one meant the speeding up in the dissolution of the other. The enterprising man with capital behind him was not going to observe the regulations of any company as to the number of workmen he might employ or the amount of goods he might sell. He meant to get a return for the money he invested, even if in so doing he ousted some poorer workman from the trade. Capitalism told against the guild regulation of industry and the domestic system and what told against the guilds told against apprenticeship.<sup>15</sup>

Before we examine the institution of 'Parish apprenticeship' and sweated labour in general we have to note that in the guild version apprenticeship entitled a man to the municipal freedom. This in turn conferred a degree of social status on him since all free citizens shared in whatever privileges were held by charter or custom. More important is the consideration that only freemen could engage in trade and industrial activities within the towns

---

<sup>15</sup>

Ibid. p. 225

unrestrained, while non-freemen and aliens frequently had to pay higher dues and were only allowed to trade at certain times and places.

In England as far back as the time of Henry VIII apprenticeship was also used as an integral part of poor relief. In fact during Henry VIII's reign an Act stipulating that vagrant children between the ages of five and fourteen should be arrested and apprenticed was passed. Another Act in the same direction was passed by Edward VI by which sons of vagrants might be apprenticed until 24, daughters until 20. Punishment for rebellion against their masters was slavery. At the close of Elizabeth's reign church wardens and overseers of the poor were empowered to bind any children whose parents were not able to support them. The binding was invalid unless made by indenture, and sanctioned by two justices of the peace. Until the Poor Law reform in 1834 apprenticeship was the most important feature of English poor relief.

It will be obvious already that the institution of parish apprenticeship has to be regarded as a distinct form of labour exploitation which differs from the system we described earlier.

The least well treated of all apprentices were probably the parish apprentices, both those pauper children who were bound by overseers and also the sons and daughters of poor people who were bound by the justices. A premium was generally given with them, and for the sake of it they would be taken by men who often could not very well support them and who had no particular appreciation of their duties. Parish apprentices were often forced upon unwilling masters, and were not unusually bound to men in the rougher and poorer trades, such as cobbling and pinmaking, where the competition was great and the conditions of work miserable.<sup>16</sup>

The primary aim of this apprenticeship was not so much to teach the apprentice a skill rather it was an attempt to solve the problem of poverty and dependency by resorting to some version of forced child labour. The idealistic version of this form of exploitation asserts that it served to remove the poor child from injurious surroundings and provide him with maintenance and that his position was, in fact, rather that of the boarded out child.

The story of the exploitation of women and children in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Europe is too well known to need elaborate treatment here. Further, the problems relating to the exploitation of child labour on a mass scale under factory production are of a different nature to those relating to a pre-industrial agrarian order resulting from colonial conquest. What would be more interesting for our purposes is an examination of the various forms of labour exploitation in rural Europe. Dunlop and Denman discussing the 1562 Statute of Artificers in England state that agriculture was encouraged by giving to landlords special facilities for obtaining labour.

Apprentices to husbandry might be taken by householders with half a ploughland in tillage, and compulsory service could be exacted from all artificers and labourers during harvest, while writs of *capias* could be issued by justices and bailiffs against apprentices and servants deserting their masters. The exodus of the rural population from the land was checked by this same clause, and by the clause ordering that a servant should not leave one place of service for another without first obtaining a testimonial setting forth the particulars of his departure.<sup>17</sup>

Having looked at the various forms of European apprenticeship one is bound to conclude that what went under the euphemistic term 'apprenticeship' in South Africa was in fact a version of child slavery that had no historical precedents in Europe. The slight resemblance with the parish apprenticeship system becomes less significant when we consider the fact that in Europe this was an attempt to solve the problem of pauperism and was organized by public agencies.

Rooted in a colonial conquest setting South African child slavery had nothing to do with the passing of skills and once the children had been captured they virtually remained at the mercy of their white masters. While it is true that the element of compulsion found in parish apprenticeship was a result of structural economic changes like the gradual impoverishment of independent agricultural and industrial producers and the decline of villeinage which drove many to the freedom of the roads thus producing masses of poor children who could be exploited, in South Africa we are dealing with a case of calculated racial genocide which spares the children in order to exploit them as chattels with no measure of protection whatsoever.

The nature of these differences between forms of labour exploitation in colonial and non-colonial situations will become more obvious when we consider the institution of labour tax.

The process of colonial conquest may be regarded as consisting of two principal aspects, namely, the dispossession of indigenous groups (peacefully or violently), and the coercion of the dispossessed to labour for the settlers

at the cheapest possible price. Actually the process of dispossessing indigenous peoples is itself a means of 'closing the resources' in Nieboer's sense since the conquered have to choose between starvation and servitude.

It is central to Nieboer's thesis that where resources are completely closed, that is, where the cultivable land has all been appropriated free labour is likely to emerge since sheer necessity will force the landless to sell their labour power at the cheapest possible rate. So in a sense complete dispossession renders coercion unnecessary. On the other hand as long as resources remain partially open some coercive mechanisms have to be devised by the dominant group in order to expedite the exploitation of the conquered.

In an earlier Chapter we pointed out how the whole problem of labour was a central aspect of the frontier confrontation in the eastern Cape leading to that great myth of Afrikanerdom, namely, the trek. One of the most striking peculiarities of South African society derives from the fact that whereas, say in the Americas, the white settlers there had to import African slaves in order to solve their labour problems either because of the inaccessibility of the local supplies or their inadequacy, in South Africa we encounter more or less the opposite situation whereby a handful of settlers who by virtue of their military superiority and genius for intrigue manage to subjugate a vast African population already used to the habits of industry by virtue of its mode of economic organization. So the problem for the South African settler was how to tap this vast potential labour supply. The labour tax institution can be seen as a mechanism devised to expedite this exploitation.

at the cheapest possible price. Actually the process of dispossessing indigenous peoples is itself a means of 'closing the resources' in Nieboer's sense since the conquered have to choose between starvation and servitude.

It is central to Nieboer's thesis that where resources are completely closed, that is, where the cultivable land has all been appropriated free labour is likely to emerge since sheer necessity will force the landless to sell their labour power at the cheapest possible rate. So in a sense complete dispossession renders coercion unnecessary. On the other hand as long as resources remain partially open some coercive mechanisms have to be devised by the dominant group in order to expedite the exploitation of the conquered.

In an earlier Chapter we pointed out how the whole problem of labour was a central aspect of the frontier confrontation in the eastern Cape leading to that great myth of Afrikanerdom, namely, the trek. One of the most striking peculiarities of South African society derives from the fact that whereas, say in the Americas, the white settlers there had to import African slaves in order to solve their labour problems either because of the inaccessibility of the local supplies or their inadequacy, in South Africa we encounter more or less the opposite situation whereby a handful of settlers who by virtue of their military superiority and genius for intrigue manage to subjugate a vast African population already used to the habits of industry by virtue of its mode of economic organization. So the problem for the South African settler was how to tap this vast potential labour supply. The labour tax institution can be seen as a mechanism devised to expedite this exploitation.

Agar-Hamilton describes the history of the relations between what he calls civilized and uncivilised races in South Africa as naturally falling into three stages. The first stage is one in which the two races eye one another at a distance. "Numerically inferior the whites are inclined to try methods of conciliation in dealing with the natives. Native rulers are treated as sovereign and independent princes, and are flattered with fine words and gifts that are not far from tribute."<sup>18</sup> The second stage brings open war. The third and last stage sees the Africans reduced to subjection. We are not here interested in Agar-Hamilton's own preconceptions -- for instance it would be easy to point out that the notion of the settlers paying tribute to Africans is completely ludicrous. Tribute, by definition, is a power relationship and is a consequence of, and hence does not precede but follows conquest. What we are interested in is his third stage, namely, subjection.

We have already shown in the case of the Eastern frontier how despite the formal abolition of slavery the social order that emerged was one in which the major feature was the contradiction between the dominant white settlers and the colonized Africans and that labour relations approximated slavery rather than free labour.

As far as the Boer republics were concerned we must note the fact that their emergence marked the first occasion whereby conditions were conducive for the emergence of what we shall describe as a pure settler state. The consistent feature of the political development of the Cape had been the absence of a political machinery run purely in the interests of the



Boers. Earlier we noted how the prescriptions of the Dutch East India Company served to supervise and restrict the activities of the Boers and later how both the short-lived Batavian regime and British rule passed legislation to which the settlers were opposed.

Now for the first time (except of course the ill-fated republics of the late eighteenth century) the Boers were able to use their own state run purely on racist lines to deal with the whole problem of the relations with the conquered groups. Thus in the Boer republics we find in a primitive and more or less embryonic form what we shall describe as the racist state. The chief characteristic of this state is that unlike the class state found in fairly homogeneous societies it does not pretend to cater for the needs of the entire society but for the dominant minority. Indeed, even participation is restricted to this settler minority. Thus it is able to perpetuate the essentially colonial nature of inter-group relations while at the same time it frees itself from the fetters that might be imposed on it by the mother country in the classical colonial situation.

Thus Agar-Hamilton's third stage of subjection involves not only the military conquest of the Africans but the whole body of political mechanisms devised by the settlers to control their subjects as well as exploit their labour power. For the Boers this problem was further complicated by the unsettled state of the African groups in the northern provinces because of the inter-group strife arising from Tshaka's military despotism. Hence we are told that for instance in the case of the short-lived Natal republic the major problem that faced the settlers there was "how to deal with 'native' refugees entering Natal republic."

In an attempt to solve this problem the Natal Volksraad passed legislation forbidding Africans from crossing the Tugela river. However this exclusion scheme failed partly because of "the anxiety of the individual European to obtain labour to work his farm". Thus recourse was made to that peculiarly colonial institution which is both a political and an economic panacea from the point of view of the white minority in that it facilitates exclusion from any meaningful participation in political life by the conquered while ensuring an endless flow of cheap labour to be exploited and dispensed with at will, namely, the reserve.

Thus in August 1841 the Volksraad approved of a scheme whereby the area to the north of the Umzimvubu was "to be given to the natives for so long as their behaviour remained satisfactory and as long as they obeyed the rulings of the Government of the Republic and the laws made by the Volksraad." The district was to be ruled by an 'upper chief' or 'resident' to be appointed by the Raad. The Commandant General assisted by the burghers was given charge of the actual removal scheme. In January 1842 the Volksraad passed another piece of legislation, namely, the Vagrancy Code. According to this scheme an alternative arrangement was favoured, namely, the settling of Africans not in one reserve but in locations assigned to them in each field cornetcy. Other measures adopted in order to ensure an equitable distribution of cheap labour were various Pass laws and a limitation of African families on each white farm to five.

The specific form which tribute in the form of labour tax took differed according to the strength of the African group which the settlers were dealing with. The usual pattern was for the completely subjugated groups to be forced

to pay a yearly tax to the exchequer of the state. Ivory and cattle were the main items involved. Further, the chiefs were instructed to supply the settlers with 'free' labour. Legislation passed by the Transvaal Boers made the field cornets responsible for the distribution of labour. "'Free' labour was to be given for periods of not longer than fourteen days for each native. Refusal to work on the part of each labourer might be dealt with only by the field cornet who, after enquiry into the alleged refusal, might inflict not more than twenty-five strokes with a flat thong."<sup>19</sup> Some African groups who happened to be allowed to settle on what was supposed to be land belonging to the settlers had to pay a form of quit rent which was paid in the form of a stipulated amount of labour for the settlers.

However, in dealing with African groups who still had some degree of military organization to enable them to resist, e.g. Mzilikazi's people, the Boers shelved the question of tribute by means of a vague promise of military assistance which amounted to very little in practice. There was yet another category of chiefs who were regarded as friendly to the Boers. Chief Moroka who had been living with the Wesleyans before the Boers came was regarded as such. He was declared to be a 'burgher' of the republic and was thus only subject to the ordinary citizen's duty, namely, serving on the commando. His men were thus used as servants and carriers during Boer expeditions against other African groups. It is needless to mention that with all the groups the Boers adopted

---

<sup>19</sup>

Ibid. p. 198.

a policy of enforced disarmament though they found it extremely difficult to restrain the gun runners from selling guns to the Africans. Indeed some African chiefs invited missionaries with a view to obtaining weapons.

A slightly different version of cheap labour exploitation appeared in Natal province under British rule. The leading hand here was Shepstone who is regarded as the father of the Natal policy relating to the government and exploitation of Africans. His policy was

to preserve as far as possible the existing Native system of government and to give it a legal standing in our own system. The kernel of the plan was the proclamation of the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal as Supreme Chief (1849) and the installation of himself as Secretary for Native Affairs, through whom the whole activities of the State as regards natives - legislative, administrative and judicial - should be carried on in the Supreme Chief's name.

The ideological position behind the Shepstone policy is approvingly expressed by Brookes in the following passage: Broadly speaking, most modern thinkers on the Native question argue as if there were no via media between the principle which refuses to acknowledge any real difference between Europeans and Natives, the policy of identity as we may call it, which has dominated many aspects of Cape policy, and the principle which insists on the subordinate position of the Native in the body-politic, the policy of subordination which is the key-note of Orange Free State and much of Transvaal legislation and administration. Between the policy of identity and the policy of subordination lies ... the way out of the difficulty, the policy of differentiation, with which it is only fair that the name of Sir Theophilus Shepstone should be permanently associated. This policy is based on a full and frank devotion to the interests of Europeans and natives alike.

It does not propose to give an answer to the problem of whether the Native is inferior to the European, or equal to the European, or whether he is now inferior, but will one day be equal ... All that it asks us to accept is that the native is different from the white man, and that his development must not be diverted into unnatural and unsatisfactory channels.<sup>20</sup>

Be that as it may, what we are interested in are not the ideological strictures and the euphemistic terminology in which policies of racial domination are couched but the real nature of the institutions which these ideological pronouncements serve to buttress. Shepstone championed a policy of separation and scattering of the Africans in locations which objectively served to quell organized resistance while facilitating exploitation. We noted earlier how the Boer Volksraad had limited the number of families who might be allowed to squat on any farm to five. Ordinance 29 of Natal stipulated that

no limitation can, as proposed by the Volksraad be legally imposed upon the rights of landed proprietors to employ such a number of servants or tenants as they may see fit. It is, on the contrary, desirable to encourage any kind of amicable agreement between the different classes of the inhabitants which they may deem mutually advantageous.

The policy of providing locations for Africans was singled out as the chief reason for the shortage of labour by the settlers. However, Shepstone disputed this on the strength of the tax returns. The hut tax which the Africans had to pay was apparently sufficient to compel them to sell

---

<sup>20</sup>

Brookes, E. H. History of Native Policy in South Africa.

their labour to the whites. A clue to the terms and conditions of employment was given by the magistrate of Pafana location who believed

that any amount of labour may be procured at five shillings per month by rational treatment of the native. But I very much question the ability of the white population to employ profitably to themselves an amount of native labour commensurate with the annual value of even a quarter of the native tax ... Most assuredly, if the natives could earn the whole amount of their tax in money wages they would do so, rather than part with their cattle, their only other alternative.<sup>21</sup>

Out of £1, 918.7s. collected as taxes at Inanda location only £35 had been paid in cattle.

However, the settlers wanted the locations removed because "they dried up the source whereby an abundant and continuous supply of kaffir labour for wages might have been procured". Moreover, they argued that forced labour would be in the interests of the Africans since they were unlikely to realize the benefits of civilization without compulsion. It would seem that all the work was done by the blacks hence according to the same magistrate

He (the native) herds the cattle, milks the cows, churns the butter, loads it on the wagon, the oxen of which he inspans and leads. He cuts wood, and thatch, he digs sluits, and makes bricks and reaps the harvest; and in the house invariably cooks; and in the towns he acts as children's nurse and laundryman.<sup>22</sup>

To conclude this Chapter we have to touch on the question of the significance of these forms of forced labour for the problem of stratification in South African society today. It may be plausibly argued after all that forced labour

---

21

Op. cit. p. 415.

22

Op. cit. p. 424, Robertson, N. H.

was a significant feature of early capitalistic development in Europe and that the political element is not new since most of the forced labour was supplied by the state. The old agricultural serfdom, though it disappeared quite early in England, lasted till much later in the rest of Western Europe while in eastern Europe it went down into the nineteenth century; and it was widely used by the early capitalists.

Nussbaum, a student of Sombart's, has pointed out that

The Fuggers of Augsburg in the 16th century held wide territories in lordship whose inhabitants were obliged to weave for them. As late as 1788 mining in Silesia was carried on largely by peasants bound to labour, as were also the cloth factories in Austria and in Poland and the manufacturing enterprises of 19th century Russia. There the lord usually 'hired out' his serfs to other persons, owners of factories and mines. A sort of state serfdom also was established in most European countries. In Spain as early as the 16th century, the beggars and vagabonds were rounded up and put to work. In France, in addition to the corvée, a kind of road labour tax, compulsory labour was enforced upon the paveurs and quarry workers ...<sup>23</sup>

An endless list of examples of forced labour in Europe seems again to throw doubt on the peculiarity of labour institutions in the colonial setting. What has to be examined is the whole nature of the colonial conquest of whole nations and the destruction of their political social and economic organization which reduces the entire citizenry into rightless chattels. Surely there is a qualitative difference in the forced labour institutions that arise out of such situations from those that arise during the transition from one mode of production to another though there are some striking similarities. A

framework that would cope with these difficulties would have to go far beyond the assertions of cultural pluralism. These problems will be dealt with when we deal with the nature of the South African capitalistic industrial take-off.



CHAPTER SIX  
INDUSTRIALIZATION AND CLASS FORMATION IN  
A SETTLER SOCIETY

In a previous Chapter we suggested the concept of a colonial ethnic estate system to describe the social order which emerged after the conquest of the Africans by the white settlers in the nineteenth century. It is important to note that the process of conquest was itself not uniform. We took the Eastern Cape frontier as a special case because in our view it was there that there was a balanced interplay of almost all the factors that were decisive in determining the structure of inter-group relations in the pre-industrial agrarian socio-economic order that preceded the mine-based industrial take off, namely, British colonialism; Boer territorial expansionism; missionary and trader secondary colonialism; slavery; serfdom and resistance.

In the last Chapter we showed how the forms of labour exploitation which developed in the Boer republics constituted another version of slavery.

Before we examine the transformation which was an inevitable result of the discovery of mineral deposits in the second half of the nineteenth century we have to comment further on the concept of a colonial ethnic estate system. This is in line with the view that the nature of the social order that results from the process of capitalist industrialization depends, to a great extent, on two factors, namely, the nature of the pre-industrial order and the nature and

101.  
course of the industrialization process which is itself partly determined by the first factor. By definition, this viewpoint, while conceding the fact that the process of industrialization involves more or less identical developments, precludes any notion of a 'logic of industrialism' which is the determining factor of the resultant social order.

The model of capitalist industrialization which is used in most sociological theorizing about the transformation of societies is that derived from the Western European experience. Now, this was a prolonged process dating back to the erosion of feudalism by early capitalistic developments which were later to undermine the entire feudal basis of these societies. If the proposition that the nature of the industrial order depends to some extent on the nature of the pre-industrial order has any validity it would be idle to expect that the process of capitalist industrialization would give birth to more or less identical societies regardless of whether the social order that was under transformation was feudal or colonial.

Our conceptualization of the South African conquest situation as a colonial ethnic estate system distinguishes it from most pre-industrial social orders and in particular those of Western Europe. Colonial here refers to the bifurcation of society into colonizers and colonized. This division marks off the colonial society as a type from a hierarchically arranged culturally homogeneous society on the one hand and the 'European transplant' society in which the settlers virtually exterminate the indigenous population on the other. Within colonial societies a distinction has often

101.  
course of the industrialization process which is itself partly determined by the first factor. By definition, this viewpoint, while conceding the fact that the process of industrialization involves more or less identical developments, precludes any notion of a 'logic of industrialism' which is the determining factor of the resultant social order.

The model of capitalist industrialization which is used in most sociological theorizing about the transformation of societies is that derived from the Western European experience. Now, this was a prolonged process dating back to the erosion of feudalism by early capitalistic developments which were later to undermine the entire feudal basis of these societies. If the proposition that the nature of the industrial order depends to some extent on the nature of the pre-industrial order has any validity it would be idle to expect that the process of capitalist industrialization would give birth to more or less identical societies regardless of whether the social order that was under transformation was feudal or colonial.

Our conceptualization of the South African conquest situation as a colonial ethnic estate system distinguishes it from most pre-industrial social orders and in particular those of Western Europe. Colonial here refers to the bifurcation of society into colonizers and colonized. This division marks off the colonial society as a type from a hierarchically arranged culturally homogeneous society on the one hand and the 'European transplant' society in which the settlers virtually exterminate the indigenous population on the other. Within colonial societies a distinction has often

been made between 'exploitation' colonies and settler colonies. Needless to say South Africa belongs to the second sub-type.

A sociology of conquest has to spell out the conditions under which this division between colonizers and colonized gradually disappears (if at all) especially with the appearance of what could be described as buffer groups through the process of acculturation, miscegenation and assimilation. There is little substance behind the view that there is a 'logic of colonial development' which leads to the natural integration of both groups. In fact the whole notion of integration and the disappearance of the contradiction between colonizer and colonized is highly problematic.

In this connection Pierre van den Berghe has written that "had it not been for the development of a strong form of racial (as distinct from ethnic) prejudice, South Africa could have developed into the same type of harmonious society racially mixed and culturally Western as is found in Latin America." <sup>1</sup> Untenable as his characterization of South American societies as harmonious is - a lot of research on Brazil shows how racially structured inter-group relations are in that society, and of course this characterization fails even to raise the problems relating to the Indian minorities in most of these countries - Van den Berghe has a point. We do not take the simplistic view that all colonial societies or societies with a colonial legacy are in fact all the same.

---

<sup>1</sup>Van den Berghe, P.: South Africa, A Study in Conflict, p.41.

Brookes, writing in the 1920's, made the same comparison in the following terms:

The result of the thorough-going application of the policy of identity would be in a few generations' time, that South Africa's population would consist of a small class of white aristocrats, a large and increasing mixed population, a diminishing number of poor whites rapidly intermingling with natives and coloured people, and for the largest class of all - large masses of semi-Europeanized natives. The ethnic and economic state of South Africa would be very much like that of Brazil or Chile today. There is no doubt that the majority of white South Africans look upon such a prospect with undisguised horror. There is no doubt that thoughtful and dignified 'heathen' Bantu share that horror.... We must make it our aim, then, to preserve the independent existence of a pure white race embracing all social classes in South Africa.<sup>2</sup>

This comparison with South American conquest situations is very instructive if we wish to understand the dynamics of colonial development. Theoretically it would seem that there are three possible directions in which such a society can develop. The first one is a situation where the conquered groups internalize their subordinate position and acquiesce in their own subjugation and exploitation and exclusion from all forms of meaningful political participation in the society as a whole. In this case the use of the coercive apparatus of the state by the dominant group would gradually give way to custom and a regularized system of norms of a super- and subordinate nature. In Fanon's<sup>3</sup> terms the military situation

---

<sup>2</sup>Brookes, E.H. A History of Native Policy in South Africa, p.499

<sup>3</sup>Fanon, Frantz. Towards the African Revolution.

would come to an end. In Barrington Moore's<sup>4</sup> terms the legitimacy of such a system would derive from some organic cosmology that conferred legitimacy on the role of the dominant group probably in the form of some theory of harmony of the universe that stresses resignation and the acceptance of group fate.

Culturally and racially intermediate groups would remain marginal and occupy a more or less half way position between the dominant group and the conquered and the process would be frozen at a point where further inter-group sexual and social relationships on a basis of equality were prohibited. This would approximate the model of a racial caste system. The defining features of such a society would be minimum coercion, minimum equal inter-group interaction and minimum differentiation within the groups on class lines. Though objectively the major contradiction in such a social order would still be the one between colonizer and colonized the theoretical potentialities deriving from this contradiction would not be realized due to the very fact that the question of the legitimacy of the supremacy of the superordinate group would have been settled.

Another theoretical possibility would be the emergence of a social order in which the processes of acculturation and assimilation would more or less blur the division between conquerer and conquered. This is the situation which most speculation on conquest situations

---

Moore, Barrington Jnr. Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World.

tends to view as the final stage starting with conflict, then accommodation and finally integration. This would be nearer to the model of a class society to the extent that culture and race would not be regarded as permanent obstacles to social mobility. Obviously it would be meaningless to designate this kind of social order as colonial since the colonial nature of inter-group relations would have disappeared in the process of integration. The principal contradiction to the extent that the society had followed the capitalist path of development would be between the bourgeoisie and the workers and peasants. No doubt the bourgeoisie would in the main consist of the colonizers. However, this historico-structural aspect of the nature of ownership would not be the decisive aspect of inter-group relations. Hence the problem of the legitimacy of the social order would not center around the question of the exclusion of the subordinate group from political participation on racial and cultural grounds but on the problem of class in the narrow sense of the term.

A third direction in which a colonial ethnic estate system can evolve is one whereby the dominant settler minority monopolizes all access to political power and restricts indigenous peoples' participation in the economy to the lowest unskilled jobs while using the machinery of the state to maintain a coerced inequality and exploitation as well as preventing competition between the colonizers and the colonized. It is clear that in such a case the problem of legitimacy centers around the entire nature of power arrangements in society. It is essentially a continuation of the military conquest situation to the extent that the military strength of the settler minority constitutes the final court of

appeal for all forms of discontent. For all intents and purposes the settler or racist state is nothing more than a committee for perpetuating the dominance of the settler minority and expediting the exploitation of the indigenous peoples. If such a society embarks on a course of capitalist industrialization the colonizer/colonized contradiction remains the base on which the capitalist-worker relationship is anchored. In other words class formation takes place within the context of colonial inter-group relations. A corollary fact would be the perpetuation of forms of forced labour which are usually associated with early stages of capitalist development.

In summary, a colonial conquest situation may develop in one of three directions, namely, towards some form of racial caste or partial integration or colonial conflict situation. The last direction is probably the most complex and the most problematic for both the colonizers, the colonized and other marginal groups which may be present. From the point of view of the settler minority the problem is essentially how to stabilize what is in essence a colonial conflict situation and for the colonized the problem is how to get access to political and economic power from the position of the vanquished. It will be clear already from our use of the concept of a settler state (or the race state) that our use of the term colonial does not refer primarily to the domination and exploitation of one nation by another in the classical sense of the term. Instead we have assumed that the settlers proceed to break away from the original political domination by the mother country and having thrown off the fetters that might be imposed from this end intensify the colonial nature of inter-group relations within the country.



Now that we have attempted to clarify our use of colonial we have to comment further on the notion of an ethnic estate before we examine in detail the nature of the South African pre-industrial order and the nature of the industrial transformation it underwent.

Cox defines estates in the following manner:

From a political point of view, an estate may be thought of as one of the orders of a body politic, having expressed or implied legal claim to some degree of importance in the government. From the point of view of the social structure, an estate may be thought of as one of the generally recognized social divisions of society, standing in relation to other divisions as socially superior or inferior. In other words, in any society a number of persons forming a social-status stratum more or less clearly delimited from other strata in customary or statutory law constitutes a social estate.<sup>5</sup>

Though this definition is rather vague - for instance it is rather difficult to make out what is meant by an expressed or implied legal claim to some degree of importance in the government - what it conveys is a picture of a society divided into socially superior and inferior segments in terms of a social-status hierarchy backed by legal sanctions.

Bergel is more to the point:

The estate or order system is based on law; it is a legal institution. Law establishes and maintains unequal strata; these strata have different rights and obligations, privileges and burdens. These strata consist of families rather than individuals. The rank of every unit is determined by law. The status is inherited and transmitted to the descendants. Changes in rank and status depend on legal acts by a superior and not on achievements of the individual.

---

<sup>5</sup>Cox, O.C. Caste, Class and Race, p.123.

Historically, the estate system began when victorious invaders set themselves up as a superior group ruling over the conquered as a demoted group.

Further,

from its very beginning the estate system was closely associated with landownership, and it remained so until the very end. Indeed the unequal distribution of land proved to be the crux of the system, and, finally, its undoing; at least, it was a main factor in causing the system's downfall.<sup>6</sup>

While these definitions of estate have a somewhat narrow historical reference mainly to the European estates it seems to us that the concept of estate stated in a more general form is indeed a very useful one. The fact of unequal distribution of land between groups in what is essentially a pre-industrial economy and the use of the mechanism of the law by the dominant group to maintain their political and economic supremacy seem to us useful enough points of similarity to justify the use of the concept in our case. We may have reservations about the somewhat hierarchical model that is usually associated with an estate system but once we have designated such a system as colonial it becomes obvious that what we have is a dichotomous model. Nor is there any insinuation that the system is based on any essential value consensus as Cox's 'social-status strata' might lead us to believe, for, as Bergel points out,

the history of the estate system is a thoroughly alogical series of individual murders, family feuds, group fights,

---

<sup>6</sup>Bergel, E. Social Stratification, pp.68 & 85

revolts, ruthless suppressions, a 'tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury', signifying the inability of the system to provide for internal peace and harmony.

Regarding the nature and degree of differentiation again Bergel notes that

logically the minimum requirement for an estate is the legal establishment of two hereditary classes: a privileged and underprivileged stratum. Historically such cases are rare and confined to the first stage after conquest. If the invaders are not already stratified, they soon begin to differentiate and the under-privileged scarcely remain a single stratum.<sup>7</sup>

It was recognition of the above fact that we invoked the term ethnic to describe the South African system in the second half of the nineteenth century. After the arrival of the 1820 settlers and following further immigration into South Africa the dominant settler minority became sub-divided into the English and the Afrikaner (Dutch with a sprinkling of French, German and non-white blood). This division between these two sections of South Africa's white minority buttressed by economic and other factors has failed to disappear. On the side of the subordinate groups there was of course the original division into ethnic groups which by a process of levelling by conquest was made less significant except perhaps for the Fingos who cashed in on the subjugation of the Xhosas by selling their souls to the white invaders. There was of course also the merging of the khoi-khoi with the emancipated slaves to form the Cape Coloured group which, though culturally white was excluded from dominant positions. And finally the

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. pp.88 & 99

revolts, ruthless suppressions, a 'tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury', signifying the inability of the system to provide for internal peace and harmony.

Regarding the nature and degree of differentiation again Bergel notes that

logically the minimum requirement for an estate is the legal establishment of two hereditary classes: a privileged and underprivileged stratum. Historically such cases are rare and confined to the first stage after conquest. If the invaders are not already stratified, they soon begin to differentiate and the under-privileged scarcely remain a single stratum.<sup>7</sup>

It was recognition of the above fact that we invoked the term ethnic to describe the South African system in the second half of the nineteenth century. After the arrival of the 1820 settlers and following further immigration into South Africa the dominant settler minority became sub-divided into the English and the Afrikaner (Dutch with a sprinkling of French, German and non-white blood). This division between these two sections of South Africa's white minority buttressed by economic and other factors has failed to disappear. On the side of the subordinate groups there was of course the original division into ethnic groups which by a process of levelling by conquest was made less significant except perhaps for the Fingos who cashed in on the subjugation of the Xhosas by selling their souls to the white invaders. There was of course also the merging of the khoi-khoi with the emancipated slaves to form the Cape Coloured group which, though culturally white was excluded from dominant positions. And finally the

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. pp.88 & 99

introduction of indentured Indian labour in the sugar plantations in Natal made the picture more complex.

A problem would seem to arise in designating such a society or even societies as there was no single society as a colonial ethnic estate system. We seem to have a plethora of groups with their national and geographical boundaries which make nonsense of the notion of a single society or at best befitting the label pluralism. Be that as it may, one thing cannot be disputed, namely, that whether it was in the so-called liberal Cape or the paternalistic (so-called) social order of the Boer republics the division of society into colonizers and colonized was unmistakable. There might have been an unreal doubt as to where the Coloured people belonged in this division but not a serious one. This is not to deny the differentiation within the various groups themselves but still within this colonizer/colonized framework. We prefer to use the term colonial instead of the now fashionable notion of pluralism because the latter seems to us to obscure the degree to which the bifurcation of society penetrates the entire social structure. Further, this division into oppressor and oppressed does to some degree correspond to what Ferdinand Tonnies called 'estates of birth' which depend on the assumption that "the qualities which really or presumably entitled a man and a woman to a position of authority are perpetuated through the generations".<sup>8</sup> He singled out physical traits and those physical and moral traits which are supposed to be affected by them as a case in point.

---

<sup>8</sup>Tonnies, Ferdinand, "Estates and Classes," in Lipset, S. and Bendix, R. Class, Status and Power, p.14.

Now we must proceed to ask the question as to the exact nature of the South African pre-industrial economic order. Of course the first point to make is that there was no uniform economic order as such before the industrial transformation of the country. Indeed the coastal areas of the Cape and Natal were in fact oases of commercial activity handling what exports there were. The fact that minerals were discovered in what was virtually the most backward part of the country should not blind us to the fact that the Cape, from the early days of the Dutch East Indian Company had some commercial links with the outside world. We will return to these when we look at the development of the export trade in the nineteenth century. But now we must concentrate on the economy of the Boers.

Schumann<sup>9</sup> made the following observations in this respect:

While, during the first half of the nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution introduced a new economic order in Europe -- with its mass production, the development of world industries and world markets, with the spirit of keen competition and rationalization -- we find in South Africa the tendency among the pioneer farmers to trek deeper and deeper into the interior and away from all economic and spiritual contact with the outside world.

He noted that the Great Trek affected about eight thousand people and argued that this marked an economic 'retrogression' to a more primitive form of economic organization, namely, from a system of market production and money economy to one

---

<sup>9</sup>Schumann, C.G.W. Structural Change and Business Cycles in South Africa (1806-1936), pp. 31-33.

of home production and barter economy.

Under these (insecure wilderness) conditions farming methods and the amount and nature of agricultural production, were dictated not by the needs of the market, but primarily by direct economic necessity, and to some extent by the natural and age-old desire for extensive possessions of land and cattle. In the absence of market competition the profit motive was hardly present - if the extensive farms could provide the simple necessities, and hunting could often supply deficiencies, what need was there of intensively applied exertion and keenly calculated income and expenditure?

The conclusion is obvious:

The manner of living, the whole economic and social outlook of the pioneer farmer was the exact opposite of the spirit of capitalism which Sombart takes to be the essence of the economic order which evolved in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

In other words no degree of commitment to the Calvinist version of the Protestant ethic could have performed the economic miracle by which economies are transformed.

In the same vein Leonard Thompson<sup>10</sup> notes that

until the gold and diamond discoveries, the white population of the Afrikaner Republics remained meagre and thinly spread - no more than 45,000 in 1870 - the Cape Colony had 200,000 whites. Moreover, lacking local markets and separated from the colonial towns by great distances, the republican Afrikaners remained essentially trekboers, occupying vast areas of land without improving it, living on their herds and flocks, and producing very little for exchange.

---

<sup>10</sup>Wilson, M. and Thompson, L. Oxford History of South Africa, Vol. 1, p. 425.

Apparently such trade as there was was conducted by foreigners mainly of British and Jewish origin.

At this point it might be a good idea to pose the question as to what need there was for the forms of forced exploitation that we described in the previous Chapter if the economy of the Boers was so primitive and essentially verging on subsistence. The answer to this is partly provided by Neumark who has argued that one of the major forces behind the settler expansion in South Africa was in fact the economic factor. Indeed, the Boers were never economically self-sufficient in any sense of the word. Capital accumulation with the view to profit making was obviously not the main aspect of their view of economic life. However, wagons still had to be constructed, guns had to be purchased, household goods had also to be procured even if a form of barter had to be resorted to. It is obvious, however, that without intensive enterprise geared towards production for the market with the view to making profit the degree of labour exploitation would remain limited. In other words just as European feudalism, as Marx observed, imposed a limit on the degree of exploitation of the underlings, we can say that the primitive economy of the Boers had this in-built checking device on the degree and intensity of the exploitation of the indigenous African population. Also, in a society resting on such an economy we would expect the minimum of stratification along class lines within the white group, a fact which MacMillan claims made them more 'class' conscious in dealing with the black people in their midst.

What of the rest of the country especially the



Cape? The answer is clearly provided in the following rather long quote from Frankel: 11

At the Cape, the arable production of vegetables, fruit, grain and wine for the limited market near the coastal towns formed the basis of permanent economic development. As shipping expanded and markets overseas became more accessible, the economic activities of the older portions of the colony were consolidated. This enabled the slow growth of public works - the building of roads, mountain passes and bridges - and the development of banking facilities.

After the middle of the nineteenth century the colony, with considerable growing pains, achieved some measure of economic stability. The greatest progress was in the expansion of the pastoral industry. Exports of wool from Cape ports, which amounted to only 216,000 lb. in 1835, rose to 12,000,000 lb. in 1855 and 33,000,000 lb. in 1863, when, with the value of £1,680,000, they accounted for 76% of the total exports through Cape ports. Nevertheless it is indicative of the difficulties of settlement and the lack of markets that it had taken over forty years of experimentation to bring the wool industry to this stage. Other exports consisted chiefly of hides, skins, ostrich feathers and mohair. The wine trade had declined in importance, and internal production was retarded by the slow growth of population. The foreign demand for the agricultural products of South Africa was very small, in view of the fact that other new countries were developing their agricultural resources more efficiently, and had already secured a firm footing in the markets of Europe.

As far as the distribution of the settler population was concerned in 1865 there were about 180,000 whites in the Cape, 75% of whom were occupied in agriculture, only one-eighth were engaged in some form of industry, and one-sixteenth in trade and transport. Frankel concludes that

---

11 Frankel, S.H. Capital Investment in Africa, pp.47-48.

"at this stage the fundamental requisites for rapid expansion were still absent."

As to the forms of labour on these farms Burton<sup>12</sup> wrote:

The agricultural labourers of South Africa are almost all natives or coloured people. Usual remuneration for these labourers is from 18s. to (in some districts) 20s. a month with rations and sleeping accommodation, and sometimes pastorage for a few head of cattle. Rations of mealies, with in some cases, milk and wheat two or three times a week. In some parts wages are largely paid in stock, and on the wine farms in the Western province of the Cape labourers are nominally paid about 2s. a day, but half of this is often paid in wine - a practice which is undoubtedly mischievous. In some districts of the Cape Colony a system of produce-sharing prevails on the farms, and wages are seldom paid. In such cases the natives are allowed to squat on their employer's land, in return for a share, sometimes amounting to as much as half of the crops from the land allotted to them. They also do the necessary manual work on his farm. On the Northern frontier young men sometimes work for rations and receive a heifer (worth about £3) at the end of a year. Natives living on private lands frequently pay rent for their huts, varying from £1 to £5 a year, and, where a low rent or no rent is paid, they usually contract to supply labour on the farm.

Before we examine in detail the beginnings of industrialization we have to make a few comments about the social order which we have just described. Probably the most important factor in so far as inter-group relations are concerned is the fact that the entire social order is based on the factor of conquest of a colonial nature. This implies that to the extent that settler hegemony is consolidated the more the

---

<sup>12</sup>Burton, A.R.E. The Cape Colony for the Settler, p. 13.

traditional order will be eroded or distorted in order to suit the needs of the dominant group. This is by no means a mechanical process hence it cannot be fully understood if conceptualized in terms of 'the reaction of primitive races to the white man's culture' as Elkin<sup>13</sup> and others try to do.

The point is that one does not need to postulate a complete identity of interests among all the colonizers hence there is a sense in which the activities of the missionaries and the traders interfere with the interests of the settlers. However, both groups' activities work in one direction, namely, the subjugation of the indigenous population and hence control over them. The fact of the cultural hegemony of the settlers manifests itself in the degree of the internalization of the value system of the conquerors. Activities of secondary colonial agencies which work towards the generation of new spiritual and material needs probably are more effective in inculcating ideas about the superiority of the whites than the brute force of the proper settlers. Speculations about the presence of a 'common factor' between colonizer and colonized seem to assume that this is a result of an automatic absorption of the culture of the colonizers by the colonized. Yet in essence this is a structural rather than a cultural problem and one of domination at that.

---

<sup>13</sup> Elkin, A.P. "The Reaction of Primitive Races to the White Man's Culture", Hibbert Journal (35) 1937, pp.537-45.

Radcliffe Brown,<sup>14</sup> in an unusually perceptive statement observed that

the study of composite societies is a complex and difficult task. The attempt to simplify it by considering the process as being one in which two or more 'cultures' interact...is simply a way of avoiding reality. For what is happening in South Africa, for example, is not the interaction of British culture, Afrikaner culture...but the interaction of individuals and groups within an established social structure.

The problem for a sensitive sociology of colonialism is to analyse the socio-historical evolution of inter-group interaction. Now this problem of perspective is crucial as we approach the stage which precipitated the modernization of the South African economy. The following observations on South Africa's industrialization by Sheila T. Van der Horst<sup>15</sup> illustrate our point about perspective:

Some of the Africans, who comprise two-thirds of the total population, have clung to the old ways and values in spite of taking employment, intermittently or even fairly continuously, in a money economy. Many have shown great eagerness to participate in the new society. They have shown great adaptability, surprising willingness to travel hundreds of miles and to learn its ways, from the complicated ritual of domestic service to the handling of machines and materials in mines and factories...But the presence of two basically different cultures, and the history of conflict and fear has meant that, particularly this century, as the non-whites have shown increasing ability and willingness to participate in the new society the whites have been prepared to admit them

---

<sup>14</sup>Radcliffe-Brown, A. Structure and Function in Primitive Society, p.202.

<sup>15</sup>Van der Horst, S.T. in Hunter, G. ed. Industrialisation and Race Relations, pp.98-101.

only in a limited measure to work on the lower rungs of the industrial ladder....In part, differing cultures have determined the role of members of different groups, but custom and tradition have been reinforced by prejudice, law and group action....For in fact the economic development of South Africa has been built upon the joint efforts of black and white farming, mining, commerce, and industry. Economically there has been and still is as much complementarity between white and black as there is competition. White capital and entrepreneurship cooperate with non-white labour; white skilled cooperates with non-white unskilled; but non-white labour also competes with white, especially for semi-skilled jobs....Nevertheless, despite areas of competition, complementarity is the overriding condition....

Now a theme that underlies all the above speculations is that the racist exploitative capitalistic order that is modern South Africa derives from cultural differences between the whites and the blacks there (remarks about the history of conflict notwithstanding). Also there is an assumption that the whites indeed established an industrialized order which the blacks were only too eager to join. Indeed the perspective is one that sees the coerced exploitation of rightless blacks as one of co-operation between white capital and entrepreneurship and non-white labour, and one of complementarity between black and white workers. Now for our part we do not see this as purely a problem of semantics but one of perspective.

For us the process is clear. It begins with the dispossession through military conquest and proceeds to the exploitation of the colonized as chattels in a white-dominated backward rural order which by and large is too primitive to require the intensive exploitation that capitalistically organized mass institutions presuppose. The mine is such an institution and hence in more than one

sense it is 'the plantation come to town'. Further, the transformation of the economic order through the exploitation of mineral resources not only introduced new forms of labour coercion but also intensified existing ones in the agrarian sector.

The problem of South African industrialization when approached historically is usually examined from the angle of the antagonism between the Boers and the so-called Uitlanders whose supposed interests British military power and its financial ramifications chose to champion. In line with our approach so far we would stress the decisiveness of the emergence of a peculiar type of fettered labour as an industrial manifestation of the colonizer/colonized contradiction. However, we need a more general framework in order to be able to observe and analyse the dynamics of inter-group interaction within an industrializing economic order. A framework which suggests itself for this purpose is that adopted by Barrington Moore <sup>16</sup> though it does not address itself specifically to colonial capitalist industrialization. Indeed there is a sense in which the idea of a colonial society industrializing is somewhat paradoxical and highly problematic. Throughout our analysis we shall keep a keen eye on the nature of class formation and the dynamics of inter-group interaction to see how our colonial ethnic estate system gets transformed into a peculiar version of a capitalist industrial order.

---

<sup>16</sup>Moore, Barrington Jnr. op.cit., Part Three.

sense it is 'the plantation come to town'. Further, the transformation of the economic order through the exploitation of mineral resources not only introduced new forms of labour coercion but also intensified existing ones in the agrarian sector.

The problem of South African industrialization when approached historically is usually examined from the angle of the antagonism between the Boers and the so-called Uitlanders whose supposed interests British military power and its financial ramifications chose to champion. In line with our approach so far we would stress the decisiveness of the emergence of a peculiar type of fettered labour as an industrial manifestation of the colonizer/colonized contradiction. However, we need a more general framework in order to be able to observe and analyse the dynamics of inter-group interaction within an industrializing economic order. A framework which suggests itself for this purpose is that adopted by Barrington Moore <sup>16</sup> though it does not address itself specifically to colonial capitalist industrialization. Indeed there is a sense in which the idea of a colonial society industrializing is somewhat paradoxical and highly problematic. Throughout our analysis we shall keep a keen eye on the nature of class formation and the dynamics of inter-group interaction to see how our colonial ethnic estate system gets transformed into a peculiar version of a capitalist industrial order.

---

<sup>16</sup>Moore, Barrington Jnr. op.cit., Part Three.

First we must note the six presuppositions of modern capitalism as outlined by Max Weber: 17 1. Rational capital accounting as the norm for all large industrial undertakings which are concerned with the provision for everyday wants. "Such accounting involves, again, first, the appropriation of all physical means of production - land, apparatus, machinery, tools, etc. as disposable property of autonomous private industrial enterprises." 2. Freedom of the market, in other words absence of what he calls "irrational limitations on trading in the market". 3. Rational technology, "one reduced to calculation to the largest possible degree, which implies mechanization." 4. Calculable law. 5. Free labour. "Persons must be present who are not only legally in the position, but are also economically compelled, to sell their labour on the market without restriction." 6. Commercialization of economic life. In our view it is presuppositions one, two and five that are of particular interest from the point of view of class formation and the general process of industrialization in a colonial economy. We shall return to this problem later. First, let us look at Barrington Moore's framework.

The basic premise is what he calls "three routes to the modern world". "The earliest one combined capitalism and parliamentary democracy after a series of revolutions: the Puritan Revolution, the French Revolution, and the American civil war." This he calls the bourgeois revolution. "The second path was also a capitalist one, but,

---

17Weber, Max, General Economic History, pp.208-209.



in the absence of a strong revolutionary surge, it passed through reactionary political forms to culminate in fascism." This is the conservative revolution from above ending in fascism. Finally, "in Russia and China, revolutions having their main but not exclusive origin among the peasants made possible the communist variant." <sup>18</sup> It seems to us that whereas the 'European transplant' societies are structurally closer to the so-called bourgeois democracies the colonial route to modernization is closest to Moore's conservative revolution from above.

In fact a more accurate designation of the South African industrial take-off would be that of a conservative revolution from outside. This would stress the essentially fortuitous nature of industrial development in South Africa as well as the external origins of the capital resources which were used to exploit the mineral deposits. Conservative in that it utilized pre-existing contradictions resulting from the colonial nature of the pre-industrial economic order. Further, it brought about a plethora of other contradictions which have tended at various points to reinforce or cross-cut each other resulting in some form of coerced stability. This ties up well with our observation regarding the incompatibility of colonialism with industrialism. This is because of the fact that by its very nature colonialism not only implies but in fact is in essence underdevelopment. The whole nature of colonialism presupposes the economic exploitation of the colony by the metropolitan power expedited by political domination. Indeed, viewed from this perspective, the term mother country is the grossest of misnomers.

---

<sup>18</sup> Moore, Barrington Jnr. op.cit. p.414

Before we take a closer look at the parallel with the conservative revolution from above we must note the absence in our colonial ethnic estate system of certain agrarian social features that facilitated the evolution of Western democracy viewed as a "long and incomplete struggle to do three closely related things, namely, check arbitrary rulers; to replace arbitrary rules with just and rational ones; and to obtain a share for the underlying population in the making of rules." Besides the widely accepted observation that the Western version of feudalism was more amenable to change (though it might be argued that the most important of these changes arose from outside the agrarian feudal relationship itself), Moore observes two other features.

For our purposes, the most important aspect was the growth of the notion of the immunity of certain groups and persons from the power of the ruler, along with the right of resistance to unjust authority. Together with the conception of contract as a mutual engagement freely undertaken by free persons, derived from the feudal relation of vassalage, this complex of ideas and practices constitutes a crucial legacy from European medieval society to modern Western conceptions of a free society.<sup>19</sup>

As regards the conservative route Moore notes that there are certain forms of capitalist transformation in the countryside that may succeed economically, that is, yield good profits but are in fact unfavourable to the growth of free institutions. There are two general types: A landed upper class may, as in Japan, maintain in tact the pre-existing peasant society, introducing just enough changes in rural society to ensure that the peasants generate sufficient surplus that it can appropriate and market at a profit. Or a landed

---

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p.415

upper class may devise wholly new social arrangements along the lines of plantation slavery." The latter being an extreme case of a labour-repressive system. The distinguishing feature of these systems is the use of political mechanisms to ensure an adequate labour supply rather than reliance on the mechanism of supply and demand. In fact this is more or less the same notion as implied in Franz Oppenheimer's<sup>20</sup> category of domination based on the satisfaction of economic needs by political means.

Now if we return to Weber's formula we notice straight away that in a colonial society the problem of the appropriation of all physical means of production - mainly land in the pre-industrial order (presupposition one) is settled as part and parcel of the military conquest, after all, that is what settler colonialism means. So that from the point of view of class formation the landowners will in fact be the colonizers. Now in an economic order that comes to rely on mining as the stimulus for industrial transformation it could be argued that to the extent that the conquered do still have access to some land the question as to who owns what depends entirely on fortune in so far as it is conceivable that the richest parts of the country may still be possessed by the subordinate group. However, this also is settled politically.

The area in which diamonds were discovered in 1867 was inhabited by about 3,000 Griquas, 1,000 Korannas and about 1,000 Boers. In treaties made earlier in 1834 and

---

<sup>20</sup>Oppenheimer, Franz, The State.

1846 the British had in fact recognized and endorsed Griqua ownership of the area. However, when the Boer republics were given independence Britain thereby renounced her responsibility in so far as the indigenous groups living north of the Orange were concerned except in the case of Kok's people. When the dispute arose Britain ruled that the area belonged to the Griquas and annexed it in 1871 as Griqualand West. The 'new frontier' had come.

Men came from all over the world to seek their fortunes in this flat and arid land: Boers from the Transvaal and Free State; clerks from Cape Town, Stellenbosch, and Wellington; artisans and shopkeepers from the coastal towns; Australian and American prospectors and miners; men from the cities of Europe and the British Isles; and, in their tens of thousands, Africans who came, not to seek great fortunes but to work for enough money to buy a rifle or more cattle. After the diggers came shopkeepers, publicans, traders, lawyers, land speculators and estate agents with little training, financiers and well dressed diamond buyers from London and Paris. <sup>21</sup>

There is no question of 'differential incorporation' into an industrializing order, instead, what we see are the economic and political pressures deriving from the colonial nature of inter-group relations forcing the Africans into bondage of an impersonal type.

Africans, who usually walked barefooted to the fields, often arrived in an emaciated state: 'weary, grimy, hungry, shy, trailing along sometimes with bleeding feet, and hanging heads and bodies staggering with faintness.' Many came from far in the interior with the sole purpose

---

<sup>21</sup>Marquard, Leo, The Story of South Africa, p.179

1846 the British had in fact recognized and endorsed Griqua ownership of the area. However, when the Boer republics were given independence Britain thereby renounced her responsibility in so far as the indigenous groups living north of the Orange were concerned except in the case of Kok's people. When the dispute arose Britain ruled that the area belonged to the Griquas and annexed it in 1871 as Griqualand West. The 'new frontier' had come.

Men came from all over the world to seek their fortunes in this flat and arid land: Boers from the Transvaal and Free State; clerks from Cape Town, Stellenbosch, and Wellington; artisans and shopkeepers from the coastal towns; Australian and American prospectors and miners; men from the cities of Europe and the British Isles; and, in their tens of thousands, Africans who came, not to seek great fortunes but to work for enough money to buy a rifle or more cattle. After the diggers came shopkeepers, publicans, traders, lawyers, land speculators and estate agents with little training, financiers and well-dressed diamond buyers from London and Paris. <sup>21</sup>

There is no question of 'differential incorporation' into an industrializing order, instead, what we see are the economic and political pressures deriving from the colonial nature of inter-group relations forcing the Africans into bondage of an impersonal type.

Africans, who usually walked barefooted to the fields, often arrived in an emaciated state: 'weary, grimy, hungry, shy, trailing along sometimes with bleeding feet, and hanging heads and bodies staggering with faintness.' Many came from far in the interior with the sole purpose

---

<sup>21</sup>Marquard, Leo, The Story of South Africa, p.179

of earning £6 for a gun, the only weapon with which they could hope to protect their land and cattle against the invading colonists. No one accepted responsibility for the newcomers. Their destitution rendered them unfit for hard toil, but forced them to labour twelve hours a day and more. They slept on the bare earth without shelter or in a brushwood hut, and suffered greatly from the cold. They lived on mealie-meal, with an occasional chunk of refuse meat. Water, at 2s 6d. a bucket, was beyond their means. Many acquired a taste for Cape brandy, retailed at 3d. a tot and 10s. 6d. a gallon. There were no laws to regulate wages and working conditions, impose safety measures against accident or disease, or enforce the payment of workmen's compensation.<sup>22</sup>

The implications are clear from the point of view of class formation. We shall return to these forms of fettered labour when we develop the notion of the mine as 'the plantation come to town', but we must first take a closer look at ownership.

In the excerpt we quoted earlier from Leo Marquard there is the statement to the effect that the Africans who went to the mines went, not to seek fortunes, but to work for enough money to buy guns and cattle. It is interesting to note that at one point the white diggers maintained that Africans stole half the output with the 'partially civilized kaffir' as the chief culprit. In a situation of laissez-faire fortune hunting it might be expected that anyone can accumulate wealth if they are lucky hence there would normally exist some degree of openness in the diamond greed race. Not so in the colonial set up. There the law is blatantly the instrument of the dominant group hence as early as 1870 a Diamond Digger's

---

<sup>22</sup>Simons, H.J. and R.E. Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950, p.35.

Protection Society was formed which demanded that "no licence to dig should be granted to a Native," prohibited all people not of European stock from holding claims of diamonds in their own right. It also stipulated that no one was to buy diamonds from a servant unless he produced an employer's written permission to sell. The executive council of the Orange Free State adopted these proposals as law.

When the British took charge of the mining area in 1871 these restrictions were scrapped and Africans and Cape Coloured people could legally take out a licence and dig like the whites. However,

the whites protested vigorously, especially when diamond yields declined, or prices fell, or the cost of claims rose.... Riots swept through the streets of New Rush, the site of Kimberley, in 1872; tried to lynch an Indian who was accused of buying diamonds; burnt tents and canteens of suspected traffickers in stolen gems; chased and flogged African passers by.<sup>23</sup>

Thereupon the British commissioners in charge of administering the diggings cancelled all licences held by black people and ruled that no more licences were to be issued to them except with the permission of a diggers' committee or of a board of seven bona fide white claim holders. Despite token resistance to this racial monopoly of the access to ownership put up by the Cape governor Barkly it is clear that in a colonial situation the development of capitalist institutions is not governed by some invisible hand of supply and demand or blind fortune (if there was ever such a thing) but by the clear hand of white domination and this will become

---

<sup>23</sup>Ibid...p.27.

more evident when we tackle the question of labour relations in such institutions.

Our discussion of ownership and inter-group relations also has implications for Max Weber's other pre-supposition of modern capitalism, namely, freedom of the market, in other words absence of irrational limitations on trading in the market.

Such limitations might be of a class character, if a certain mode of life were prescribed for a certain class or consumption were standardized along class lines, or if a class monopoly existed, as for example, if the townsman were not allowed to own an estate or knight or peasant to carry on industry; in such cases neither a free labour market nor a commodity market exists.<sup>24</sup>

Now Max Weber's characterization of these limitations as irrational is obviously problematic. In fact while they obviously are irrational from the point of view of a somewhat laissez-faire capitalism that relied almost entirely on bourgeois laws of supply and demand, from the point of view of the settler minority they are quite rational, while from the point of view of the subordinate groups they are simply oppressive in so far as they are aimed at making the capitalistic parasitism class as well as racially structured. Thus we find that the concepts of class and race are so intertwined as to be inseparable in the colonial situation. In fact far from this race monopoly of the access to the means of production being in any way incompatible with capitalism, it expedites a certain variant of capitalist exploitation which is no less viable. The three pillars of colonial capitalism seem to be exclusion of non-settler groups from access to the means of production; the means of domination (wider aspects of decision making); and the narrower means of maintaining dominance, namely, the right

---

<sup>24</sup> Weber, Max, op.cit. p.208



to carry arms hence the general disarmament of the colonized in 1878 which made Hintsa's dogs (the Fingos) complain that they were being disarmed because they were black.

The truth is that colonial society is essentially the continuation of the military situation in whose womb colonial domination is conceived as Franz Fanon points out. When it has achieved some degree of stability it relies heavily on political mechanisms to manipulate the structure of inter-group relations which are always based on the principle of super and subordination. The settler minority combines in its hands, in other words, has the most absolute monopoly of both political and economic power as well as a cultural hegemony known to any group in a hierarchically organized fairly culturally homogeneous society. In our case of course this unity of monopoly was not realized by the white minority till a later stage. In fact one of the peculiarities of the South African situation is that segments of the ruling power class have historically been involved in the bloodiest of encounters in order to pave the way for the consolidation of this very race-based power class.

At the early stages of industrialization the principal disjuncture on the scene of the gold discoveries was, though superficially an ethnic contradiction, in essence a struggle between two segments of a dominant settler minority one relying on political power for its dominance and the other on the strength of capital. Before we proceed to a discussion of Weber's other 'presupposition', namely free labour (by

far the most important from the point of view of relevance for class formation), we have to explore this contradiction further.

In a previous Chapter we suggested the concept of the settler state (the pure racist state). Now, there is a sense in which South Africa's political development in the last hundred years can be seen as nothing more than a ruthless attempt by the Boer segment of the settler minority to utilize the mechanism of the state to improve the economic position of the landowners and that of the poor Afrikaner workers and thus consolidate white domination in general. The last two decades have seen the final and most successful of these debuts. During the early stages of industrialization the rewards of political hegemony were less clear cut given the structural limitations of the economic order. However, even then it was a valuable asset. The history of the Transvaal republic dominated by the figure of Paul Kruger testifies to this proposition. The truth is that the Boers as a group had to rely mainly on political power to withstand the onslaught brought by the forces of capitalist greed on their own backward racist social order in which they saw themselves as enacting a second coming of the people of Israel.

James Bryce<sup>25</sup> made the following observations on the culture of these racist barbarians:

Two centuries of solitary pastoral life have not only given them an aversion for commerce, for industrial pursuits, and for finance, but an absolute incapacity for such occupations, so that

---

<sup>25</sup>Bryce, J. Impressions of South Africa.

when gold was discovered in their country, they did not even attempt to work it....(The laws at one time forbade the working of the goldmines altogether, for they held with the Roman poet that it does least harm when undiscovered) but were content to sell, usually for a price far below its value, the land where the reefs lay, and move off with the proceeds to resume elsewhere their pastoral life. They have the virtues appropriate to a simple society. They are brave, good-natured and felt themselves drawn together not only by language, but by community of ideas and habits. In 1881, when the republic recovered its independence, there were neither roads, railways, nor telegraphs in the country. Its towns were rough hamlets planted round a little church. Its people had only the bare necessities of life. The taxes produced scarcely any revenue. The treasury was empty, and the government continued to be hard-pressed for money and unable to construct public works or otherwise improve the country till gold was discovered....

We may remark here that the Boer culture satisfied at least one of Barrington Moore's prerequisites for a pre-industrial order compatible with the development of a free industrial order, namely, resistance to unjust authority. However, even this was the worst of colonial distortions. Earlier we pointed at the way in which ideas deriving from the French revolution were distorted under colonial conditions to folk ideas of a semi-fascist kind. We also remarked about the anarchistic tendencies of these people as evidenced by the fact that their history is in a way one of a series of abortive republics. Thus their conception of just authority was at once one-sided and racist hence they combine the most ruthless form of racist brutality with the most extreme form of self-delusive self-righteousness.

Now the discovery of gold in such backward circumstances was bound to bring about problems that are

peculiar to a situation of a 'fortuitous' industrialization process. For a start gold mining, "the power-house of modern enterprise" in South Africa, unlike diamond mining, needed large amounts of capital and a greater degree of technical knowledge and skill. Thus the major share of the industry soon fell into the hands of a small number of companies controlled by big capitalists who had come to dominate the diamond industry. The towering figures of Rhodes and Barnato, Robinson, Rudd, Beit and Wernher duly took their positions in the newly discovered hole of riches. As early as 1889 some of the leading capitalists in the gold industry came together to form the chamber of mines. What interests us at the moment are the problems raised by this invasion of a rural order by the unrestrained forces of capitalist greed.

Marais<sup>26</sup> sums the problem in the following manner:

The immigrants brought in by the new industry came to the part of South Africa where they were least assimilable to the existing population: for the South African Republic was the most backward state in the land. Its white inhabitants - the Boers - were mainly cattle grazers owning large ranches, as their ancestors had done before them for generations. They had grown up in the traditions of the frontier, and every man had from boyhood learnt to ride and handle a gun. Until the opening of the gold fields on the Rand they had lived farther from civilizing influences than the rest of South Africa. The new immigrants were largely urban in their outlook and habits. In addition they were mainly British: and fighting rooinek was becoming almost as much part of the Boer tradition up north as fighting 'Kafirs'.

---

<sup>26</sup>Marais, J.S. The Fall of Kruger's Republic, p.4.

A fermentation was bound to follow the pouring of so much new wine into the old republican bottles.

The Boer reaction to this invasion was the use of the monopoly of political power to maintain a position of dominance in face of the transformation of the economic substructure by the forces of a mine-based capitalism. By monopolising political power the Boer state could preside over the transformation which structurally would have undermined its own political base. The Boers could not seriously adopt a conservative view in face of the riches that flowed from the exploitation of the minerals. So by means of some form of spoils system they managed to grab the most influential civil service positions while, by adopting a system of granting concessions which were in fact monopolies, they managed to control the development of the infrastructure that accompanied the development of gold mining. Ethnic - class interests got priority over considerations of efficiency. A good example of this was that of the Johannesburg and Pretoria tramways which were operated by horsepower with the volksraad committed against electrification in the interests of the fodder-growers.

The effect of giving concessions was also to isolate some capitalists and bring them into some alliance with Kruger's clique. He could also manipulate Dutch, French, German and British capital as in the case of the dynamite monopoly. No doubt this disjunction between political and economic power led to a lot of corruption while the exclusion of all the immigrants from political power had repercussions on class-consciousness within the Uitlander section of the

population. In 1892 an association, called the National Union, was formed by a number of Uitlanders, "to obtain, by all constitutional means, equal rights for all citizens of the Republic, and redress all grievances." Though the association had been formed by the 'middle class' element within the Uitlanders, namely, traders, professional men, engineers etc. it came to command the support of the mine-owning capitalists and a considerable section of the white workers.

The capitalists came to support the movement reluctantly only after their fund-raising attempts for the purpose of trying to get 'a better volksraad' had failed. But the 'irrational limitations' imposed on them by the state grew too heavy. These included burdens resulting from the dynamite monopoly, high tariff both on foodstuffs and mine machinery, the heavy railway rates for coal, as well as a system of liquor laws which made their native workers an unreliable workforce. It is also interesting to note that the German element amongst the Uitlanders supported the Boer state. Amongst the Boers themselves there was a minority who advocated reforms. This section also opposed Kruger's reliance on Hollander advice in matters of state. Now this contradiction between the ethnic-cum-class sections of the white minority led to both the abortive Jameson raid and provided a rationale for British imperialist intervention with its military might.

Now we come to what is undoubtedly the most important aspect of industrialization and class formation in a colonial society, namely, the recruitment of the labour force. We shall recall that Weber stipulated free labour as one of the six presuppositions of modern capitalist enterprises.

It is in contradiction to the essence of capitalism, and the development of capitalism is impossible, if such a propertiless stratum is absent, a class compelled to sell its labour services to live; and it is likewise impossible if only unfree labour is at hand.<sup>27</sup>

Of course the notion of free labour is a problematic one as Weber himself realizes when he points out that these workers though formally sell their labour voluntarily, actually do so "under the compulsion of the whip of hunger." We shall return to this problem at a later stage.

Nussbaum<sup>28</sup> has written that "the development of a wage-working class is one of the essential prerequisites of the capitalistic economy. The problem is two-fold: first, how the propertiless class, the potential wage workers, came to be, and second, how they were organized into a suitable and responsive labour force.."

Now in the South African case the problem is even more complex than this because of what we have described as the fortuitous nature of the industrialization process there. In fact in so far as the scene of the mineral discoveries was concerned, the problem was one of adapting the entire population to industrial life. Interestingly enough the distortion of European notions which we pointed out in relation to justice and the revolutionary slogans originating in France can also be noticed in the sphere of religion.

---

<sup>27</sup>Weber, Max op.cit pp. 208-209.

<sup>28</sup>Nussbaum, F. History of the Economic Institutions of Modern Europe, p. 108.

It is in contradiction to the essence of capitalism, and the development of capitalism is impossible, if such a propertiless stratum is absent, a class compelled to sell its labour services to live; and it is likewise impossible if only unfree labour is at hand. <sup>27</sup>

Of course the notion of free labour is a problematic one as Weber himself realizes when he points out that these workers though formally sell their labour voluntarily, actually do so "under the compulsion of the whip of hunger." We shall return to this problem at a later stage.

Nussbaum <sup>28</sup> has written that "the development of a wage-working class is one of the essential prerequisites of the capitalistic economy. The problem is two-fold: first, how the propertiless class, the potential wage workers, came to be, and second, how they were organized into a suitable and responsive labour force.."

Now in the South African case the problem is even more complex than this because of what we have described as the fortuitous nature of the industrialization process there. In fact in so far as the scene of the mineral discoveries was concerned, the problem was one of adapting the entire population to industrial life. Interestingly enough the distortion of European notions which we pointed out in relation to justice and the revolutionary slogans originating in France can also be noticed in the sphere of religion.

---

<sup>27</sup>Weber, Max op.cit pp. 208-209.

<sup>28</sup>Nussbaum, F. History of the Economic Institutions of Modern Europe, p. 108.



It is one of Max Weber's theses that Protestantism was one of the contributory factors in the rise of the 'spirit of capitalism.' Now the primitive version of Calvinism which shaped the entire world view of the Boers was, if anything, an initial obstacle to capitalist modernization at the earlier stages of development. The following rather humorous examples indicate this point. A middle aged Boer woman on learning that the new way to make soap was with soda said:

If the dear Father had meant soda to be put into soap, what would he have made milk-bushes for, and stuck them all over the veld as thick as lambs in the lambing season?...My mother boild soap with bushes. If the wrath of God is to fall on this our land, it shall not be through me. Let them make steam wagons and their fire carriages; let them go on as though the dear Lord didn't know what he was about when He gave horses and oxen legs - the destruction of the Lord will follow them. I don't know how such people read their Bibles. When do they hear of Moses and Noah riding in a railway?

A Boer in the Northern Transvaal explained his failure to dig irrigation ditches in the following terms while complaining about the drought: "The Lord knows best, I must not hinder his work. If it does not rain, the Lord means it not to, I will dig no ditches." Asked as to what he would do, he replied, "I shall pray, and in the Lord's good time the rain will come." 29

If we tackle the problem of the recruitment of the labour force for the mines from the point of view of answering the two points raised by Nussbaum, namely, how the propertiless class came to be, and how they were

---

29 James, Selwyn, South of the Congo pp. 26-27.

organized into a suitable and responsive labour force we will come nearer to an understanding of what Barrington Moore calls a labour repressive system. At this juncture we also should note again Nieboer's thesis that free labour is unlikely to develop in a situation where there is some degree of openness of resources.

Now we should note that one of the effects of the discovery of minerals in South Africa was the complete closure of resources, namely, land, as land prices increased amidst wild speculation. This created a problem not only for the colonized and dispossessed Africans but also for a considerable section of the settler minority. We noted the existence of more than one relationship to the factor of land amongst the settlers when we pointed to the phenomenon of 'bywoner-ship'. However, as long as the economy remained backward and undeveloped class differences could not emerge amongst the settlers in any serious form.

Now with the discovery of minerals and the concomitant commercialization of economic life in general there arose the problem of how the settlers who were squeezed out of the cut-throat competition for land were to adapt themselves to the new situation in view of their lack of skills for the new life. So already this answers both aspects of Nussbaum's question. In a backward rural economy that is driven to industrialization by the discovery of minerals a certain proportion of the population are automatically squeezed out of the land as a result of speculation, a somewhat similar process to the enclosure movement in England except that the latter was a result of the commercialization of agriculture. But in effect the result, namely, the releasing of a considerable section of the

population to the freedom of the roads, was more or less the same. Secondly, given the fact that this population did not have the requisite skills for the gold industry, for example, it followed that the new industry had to depend on immigrant labour for the most skilled positions. Already this makes the picture a lot more complex than the standard method of industrialization, say, in the West, for example.

However, the most important point from the point of view of class formation is the fact that this takes place within what is essentially a colonial situation. In other words, a pre-existing bifurcation of the society into colonizers and colonized exists. So in effect the answer to the question as to how the propertiless class arose in our situation as far as the colonized are concerned lies in the factor of colonialism itself. Hence we pointed to the inflow of Africans into the diamond mines amidst the most gruelling hardships. Further, the question of the closure of resources has a wider aspect than the one indicated by Nieboer in the colonial situation. In other words it is not only the fact of dispossession by conquest but also the application of mechanisms of a political kind to coerce the colonized into selling their labour for virtually nothing. We pointed to taxation in the colonies as a major device used to expedite this exploitation. So, in short, to the extent that there is a marginal degree of openness of resources the colonial capitalist class relies on the mechanism of the settler state to coerce the colonized into labouring for their white masters.

It is very interesting to note at this point the difference between our racist state and the bourgeois or class state in yet another respect. Marx noted that under capitalism the task of the state is to preside over an anarchic civil society in which individuals and classes, freed from the restraints of feudalism, pursue their economic interests substantially unrestrained by governmental action: "Anarchy is the law of civil society emancipated from disjoining privileges, and the anarchy of civil society is the basis of the modern public system, just as the public system is in turn the guarantee of that anarchy." 30

Again we note the difference between the kind of corvée supplied by the state to early capitalist enterprise in Europe and the kind of forced labour which we encounter in the colonies. Of all the statutes passed in Western European countries prohibiting vagrancy and making provision for forcing vagrants to surrender themselves to be exploited by the capitalists there is nothing to equal the deliberate coercive, exploitation-expediting provisions of, say, the Glen Grey Act. So, in short, the answer to our question as to the origin of the potential workers in so far as the colonized are concerned lies in colonialism itself understood both as a process of economic dispossession and political domination which in turn facilitate the exploitation of the indigenous population by the settler minority and foreign capital. We may also note at this stage that the whole system is in fact highly incompatible with the development of relatively free institutions.

Now we must deal with the second aspect of Nussbaum's question, namely, how they were organized into a

---

<sup>30</sup>Marx, K. and Engels, F. The Holy Family p. 158.

suitable and responsive labour force. In the South African mine-based economy this problem cannot be understood without grasping the phenomenon of migratory labour. Now migratory labour, by definition, is unstable labour. In fact due to the very fact that they are migratory, these workers have universally been exposed to the most ruthless form of exploitation second to slavery and indenture. The world over, they have never been able to enjoy the degree of protection that collective workers' institutions have afforded workers in most advanced capitalist societies. Both the transience of this form of labour and the shackles imposed on it have contributed towards this extreme vulnerability. This generalization can be held to be applicable to all forms of migratory labour at all times

However, the colonial situation and the structure of the mining enterprise as a capitalistically organized institution both give special sharp features relating to labour regimentation which display a degree of resemblance to the plantation as an exploitative institution resting on servile labour. Indeed, there is much substance in the thesis that the version of fettered labour found in the mining industry in South Africa is theoretically the most efficient form of labour exploitation ever devised.<sup>31</sup> All labour in South Africa, in so far as it is black, is organized according to the principle of 'destabilization', that is, the basic assumption is that the cities which provide the employment are white people's exclusive property and the presence of black people is tolerated as an evil necessity. The obvious corollary of this is that they are deprived of all rights there,

---

<sup>31</sup>Rex, J. Race, Colonialism and the City, p. 274.

and everywhere else for that matter. The mining compound is the nucleus as well as the extreme manifestation of this principle hence we suggested the notion of the mining compound as 'the plantation come to town'.

A plantation is an establishment with compulsory labour, producing garden products especially for the market. The plantation economy universally arose wherever the conduct of agriculture by a class of overlords as a result of conquest coincided with the possibility of intensive cultivation, and was especially characteristic of the colonies, 32

writes Max Weber.

The plantation proper operates with disciplined servile labour. We do not find, as in the case of the manorial economy, a large estate and individual small holdings of the peasants side by side, but the servile population are herded together in barracks. The main difficulty of the enterprise lies in the recruiting of labourers. The workers have no families and they do not reproduce themselves.

While it is obvious that the black workers in South Africa's mining compounds cannot be regarded as the property of the mine owners whom they never even encounter in personal terms the degree of powerlessness while they serve their so-called contract is qualitatively much the same as that of the slaves in the classical sense. There is no doubt that the true historical precedent of the mining compound is in fact to be found in the slave barracks of early Cape Town with the important distinction that at least there the sexual needs of the chattels were provided for. It is no

---

<sup>32</sup>Weber, Max, op.cit., pp. 12-13.

coincidence that these mines also relied on convict labour. Compared with the forms of forced labour which we described in the Boer republics we can stress the mass nature of this new form of forced labour and the impersonal nature of the compulsion.

Lange wrote as follows on the question of compulsion:

In former times the marauding minority of mankind, by means of physical violence, compelled the working majority to render feudal services, or reduced them to a state of slavery or serfdom, or at least made them pay a tribute. Nowadays the dependence of the working classes is secured in a less direct but equally efficacious manner, namely, by means of the superior power of capital; the labourer being forced, in order to get his subsistence, to place his labour power entirely at the disposal of the capitalist. So there is a semblance of liberty, but in reality the labourer is exploited and subjected, because all the land having been appropriated, he cannot procure his subsistence directly from nature, and, goods being produced for the market and not for the producer's own use, he cannot subsist without capital. Wages will rise above what is wanted for the necessities of life, where the labourer is able to earn his subsistence on free land, which has not yet become private property. But wherever in an old and totally occupied country, a body of labouring poor is employed in manufactures, the same law, which we see at work in the struggle for life throughout the organized world, will keep wages at the absolute minimum.

Compound labour, as a type of labour exploitation, belongs to the first group which Lange describes as belonging to former times, which Barrington Moore describes as repressed labour, of which slavery is the extreme type.

---

<sup>33</sup>Lange, O.R. in Nieboer, H.J. Slavery as an Industrial System, p. 42.

The irony is that whereas according to Lange's supply and demand kind of thinking access to land for subsistence is supposed to raise the level of wages presumably to act as an incentive for the worker to leave his peasant environment (the pull of industry), what we see in our colonial economy is the utilization of political mechanisms (the push of the power structure) to compel him to sell his labour at the cheapest possible price to the capitalists. The same can be said of the commercialized farms, namely, that unlike laissez-faire capitalism which relies mostly on supply and demand and hence employs a certain degree of inducement, our colonial economy relies on compulsion.

By the time of the discovery of gold the compound system of labour had firmly taken root in the diamond fields.

The compound was an enclosure surrounded by a high corrugated iron fence and covered by wire netting. The men lived, twenty to a room, in huts or iron cabins built against the fence. They went to work along a tunnel, bought food and clothing from the company's stores, and received free medical treatment but no wages during sickness, all within the compound. Men due for discharge were confined in detention rooms for several days, during which they wore only blankets and fingerless leather gloves padlocked to their wrists, swallowed purgatives, and were examined for stones concealed in cuts, wounds, swellings and orifices.<sup>34</sup>

The inextricable interconnection between political and economic power is clearly manifest in the manner of recruitment. Weber noted that the classic slave plantation

---

<sup>34</sup>Simons, op.cit., p. 42.



faced an intractable problem in recruitment because the slave population did not sufficiently reproduce itself. While this cannot be said of the immigrant worker who can fulfil his reproductive functions in between his contracts, by its very nature fettered labour is not attractive to human beings. Selwyn James <sup>35</sup> tells of a classic case of labour recruitment for the mines somewhere in the Transvaal consisting in a tax hunt conducted by ten policemen and a mine recruitment agent.

The recruiting agent had waited anxiously for June, when the hunts would begin because there had been good harvests and no drought. His method was simple. When the tax-defaulting natives were brought before the court he would offer to pay their fines if they would sign a nine-month contract to work in the mines. Natives who have no responsibilities, no families or cattle usually prefer to take the whipping or serve a goal sentence. But those who are threatened with confiscation of their cattle or with the starvation of their families are frequently willing to go up to Johannesburg.

The recruiting officer's remark was:

What I like best is to find a kaffir who hasn't paid his taxes and who has three or four strapping young sons below the taxing age. I can sometimes get them all for the price of one fine. The court usually cooperates by threatening to confiscate half their cattle. Then I step in and save the day. And they are damn' grateful too.

It will be obvious already that the problem of labour regimentation is a structural one and in our case derives from the colonial nature of the industrializing society. Now this has profound implications for the nature of class formation in so far as it affects the members of the

---

<sup>35</sup>James, S. op. cit., p. 72.

dominant minority settler group whose relation to the means of production are those of non-owners. The white workers who came as part of the rush from places like Devon, Durham, Cornwall, Australia and California had skills which could serve as their bargaining instrument in the fight for better conditions. As far as the indigenous settler workers were concerned, in terms of skill they were hardly better equipped, say, than Cape Coloured workers.

From the early days of worker agitation in the diamond fields it was quite obvious that the fact of capitalist industrialization, though potentially capable of restructuring inter-group relations with the emergence of new groups and alliances, was itself quite compatible with the perpetuation of the colonial bifurcation of society. In other words, far from it being the case that capitalist development would exert its own logic and replace the colonizer/colonized dichotomy with, say, the capitalist/worker contradiction, the latter contradiction was in fact formed within the former contradiction without destroying it and if anything, while actually strengthening it.

Now the position of the white worker becomes quite crucial in this analysis. This is so because there is nothing inherent in the workings of the capitalist mode of production that prescribes that a certain section of the working class will occupy a privileged position by virtue of their skin colour. In other words capitalism has always, at least ideal typically, ruthlessly exploited anyone if

it could. Now this ideal typical potential feature of capitalist production has led some theorists to postulate an analysis that relies on explaining what are regarded as irrational limitations on the smooth working of supply and demand as resulting from forces lying outside the capitalist economy. A more sophisticated view would say that the colonial polity as manifested in the settler state imposes restrictions of a power type on the mechanism of blind capitalist development and exploitation.

This, however, seems to us to miss the point. The colonial situation is at once a political and economic situation. Conceptually it is at once a class, power, as well as a racial situation. Before capitalist industrialization transforms the economic base these cleavages more or less overlap with one another. In other words in a backward agrarian economy the settler is at once owner of the most important resource, namely, land and also exercises political means of coercion to secure the labour power of the colonized and this cleavage corresponds with a cultural and racial division. However, with the process of industrialization some of the members of the dominant settler minority whose dominance in the old rural order had a real economic base are thrown by the new forces into an economic situation structurally nearest to that of the colonized. However, the fact of colonialism makes it possible for this group to seek alliances within the dominant group even though it has to wage a real class struggle with sections of the same dominant minority.

We have already noted that capitalist industrialization in our colonial order relies on factors of

a non-economic kind to secure a sufficient labour supply. The same political mechanisms which service capitalist industrialization and hence are part and parcel of the process at least in its colonial manifestation serve to operate against the formation of a more or less mixed working class which views its main enemy as capital. Thus

The Knights of Labour blamed De Beers, 'that great monopoly', and the 'wealthy, over estimated, disappointing politician' Rhodes for the depressed state of the working classes during the collapse of the first gold boom. 'Unity, Charity, Fidelity' were inscribed on the society's banner. The members were pledged to champion the labouring classes everywhere against monopoly capital and 'the insidious attack of cheap labour competition'. 36

A problem which arises from our analysis is that relating to the immigrant settler worker whose experience of capitalism would have been outside our colonial framework. In other words, how are we to explain the racism of the Durham miner who finds himself in the Witwatersrand? This question is all the more plausible in view of the fact that most of the early white trade unions were in fact formed by newly arrived workers who had had some experience of unionism in their own countries. Answers to this question have been suggested on two lines. Alex Hepple<sup>37</sup> notes that the exclusiveness of the white unions, to begin with, was not related to race prejudice but to the skilled/unskilled

---

<sup>35</sup>Simons, op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>37</sup>Hepple, A. South Africa A Political and Economic History

dichotomy which has been found in every industrializing order. But because this division in the colonial economy corresponds with a racial cleavage it becomes a permanent feature of trade unionism. In a different context Roger Bastide <sup>38</sup> has tried to explain the attitudes of German, Polish and Italian immigrants in Brazil by pointing out that "the foreigner does not bring his own forms of discrimination with him, but himself assimilates the Portuguese-Brazilian mentality."

For our part we think that there is much truth in both explanations but would also like to emphasize the structural nature of the problem. It must not be forgotten that the whole process of industrialization of the colonial economies took place as part and parcel of the rise of Western capitalist hegemony. Once we have made this observation it is impossible to preclude the possibility of these workers having a more or less identical world view, at least in so far as relations with the indigenous population are concerned, with the 'local' workers. Further, the whole structure of the colonial capitalist enterprise precludes the development of a broad working-class consciousness. Nor can this be dismissed as 'false-consciousness' even by a process of Lukacsian imputation. <sup>39</sup> For there is a sense in which the availability of coerced black labour is a liability to the white worker although paradoxically it is the presence of the very same

---

<sup>38</sup>Bastide, R. "The Development of Race Relations in Brazil" in Hunter, G. op. cit.

<sup>39</sup>Lukacs, G. History and Class Consciousness - Studies in Marxist Dialectics, Chap. 3.

dichotomy which has been found in every industrializing order. But because this division in the colonial economy corresponds with a racial cleavage it becomes a permanent feature of trade unionism. In a different context Roger Bastide <sup>38</sup> has tried to explain the attitudes of German, Polish and Italian immigrants in Brazil by pointing out that "the foreigner does not bring his own forms of discrimination with him, but himself assimilates the Portuguese-Brazilian mentality."

For our part we think that there is much truth in both explanations but would also like to emphasize the structural nature of the problem. It must not be forgotten that the whole process of industrialization of the colonial economies took place as part and parcel of the rise of Western capitalist hegemony. Once we have made this observation it is impossible to preclude the possibility of these workers having a more or less identical world view, at least in so far as relations with the indigenous population are concerned, with the 'local' workers. Further, the whole structure of the colonial capitalist enterprise precludes the development of a broad working-class consciousness. Nor can this be dismissed as 'false-consciousness' even by a process of Lukacsian imputation. <sup>39</sup> For there is a sense in which the availability of coerced black labour is a liability to the white worker although paradoxically it is the presence of the very same

---

<sup>38</sup>Bastide, R. "The Development of Race Relations in Brazil" in Hunter, G. op. cit.

<sup>39</sup>Lukacs, G. History and Class Consciousness - Studies in Marxist Dialectics. Chap. 3.

black labour that enables him (the white worker) to occupy a semi-parasitic position in view of the super surplus value that is milked out of fettered labour. So 'black' here may be taken both literally and figuratively.

In this Chapter we have concentrated on the problem of industrialization with the view to tracing the nature of class formation in what we have described as a settler society. The process is much more complex than we have represented it here. However, some of the questions raised here will be pursued in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN  
TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DYNAMICS  
OF SETTLER DOMINATION

In the last Chapter we dealt with the problem of industrialization and class formation in South Africa. We showed how the colonial ethnic estate order resulting from the conquest of the indigenous peoples and the introduction of Indians as indentured labour shaped the nature of class formation in the process of industrialization. Further, we noted the fortuitous nature of the basis of the industrialization process and characterised it as one falling within the range of systems which Moore describes as conservative industrialization from above.

Now our characterization of South African industrialization as conservative raises problems about the effect of radical change in the economic sphere on inter-group relations. Theories expounding the thesis of the logic of industrialism have become popular in European and North American scholarship in what has been called the post cold war period. Though these theories have a specific reference to advanced western capitalist societies and eastern European societies their implications can be extended to societies which have considerable industrialization elsewhere.

More specifically the question of the effect of industrialization on race relations was the subject of a collection of papers edited by Guy Hunter.<sup>1</sup> In this collection Herbert Blumer,<sup>2</sup> arguing against conventional views on the subject, has written that

---

<sup>1</sup> Hunter, G. Industrialization and Race Relations.

<sup>2</sup> Blumer, H. In Hunter ibid. pp. 220-254.



It is a mistake to assume that the rational motif of industrialism signifies an automatic undermining of a racial order into which industrialism enters. To the contrary, a rational imperative in industrial operations may function to maintain and reinforce the established racial order.

Referring specifically to South Africa and the southern United States and many areas under colonial domination he states:

In such regions where a superordinate-subordinate racial arrangement was deeply entrenched, industrialization meant essentially a transfer of the framework of the established racial scheme to the new industrial setting. Members of the subordinate race were assigned to and essentially confined to the lower levels of the industrial occupational structure; no positions were opened to them inside the managerial ranks of the industrial enterprises operated by members of the dominant race; doors were shut to their entrepreneurship in the operating world of the dominant racial group; and the traditional colour line was firmly held. . . industrialization in these regions did not undermine the established racial order but merely came to fit inside it.

Our approach to the problem of South African industrialization is in line with Blumer's observation, namely, that capitalist industrialization there took place within what were essentially colonial inter-group relations. However, stated in this form this perspective can rightly be accused of being static. In fact Blumer himself seems to be aware of this when he says that "indeed, we have here somewhat of a paradoxical situation in that while industrialization may alter greatly the social order, it may leave the racial system that is embedded in that order essentially intact". In other words the new order "fits inside the established racial system." Here, though Blumer's insights are valuable in their critique of conventional deterministic thinking, he seems to abstract what he regards as the racial system from the social order in a manner much too mechanical.

Our own view was stated earlier in the following terms, namely, that the industrialization process takes place within colonial inter-group relations hence it is affected by the latter while it also influences these relations. This leads to a conception of colonial capitalist industrialization as a specific type which differs from its metropolitan counterpart not only in that it is racially structured but also in its imposition of fetters on the indigenous labour. In this respect we might say that colonial industrial capitalism retains and incorporates the racial aspects of colonial relations and the compulsive element of the estate order in general. Speaking of European estate labour relations Dobb<sup>3</sup> has written:

While the estates were for the most part farmed by hired labour, this labour was still subject to a good deal of de facto compulsion and to a large extent came from persons who still treated wages as a supplementary, rather than the sole form of livelihood. The labourer could be forced to accept work at legal rates, and was restricted in moving from his village without the sanction of the local lord. Indeed, the legislation of the fourteenth century robbed the poorer freemen of what had previously distinguished them from the villani adscripti glebae freedom to move at will.

As a corollary to the above observation we may note that colonial capitalism insofar as it relies on what is essentially unfree labour necessitates a definition of rational capitalism broader than that of Marx and Weber who both saw free labour as part of the kernel of rational capitalist exploitation. Nussbaum has pointed out in his own definition that the capitalist enterprise which is the visible form of capitalistic economy may use free or unfree labour.

---

<sup>3</sup> Dobb, M. Studies in the Development of Capitalism p. 20

Now we have to return to the other side of the question, namely, how the industrialization process shapes the colonial inter-group relations. Blumer's analysis does not deal with this problem because in his own words "the industrial order fits into the pre-established racial order". In reacting against the view that race is epiphenomenal Blumer goes to the opposite extreme and can be justly accused of adopting a static approach.

A closer analysis of the problem would suggest that industrialization does affect inter-group relations though it does not necessarily destroy the overall racial patterning of the society. A trivialized statement of some of these changes has been expressed in terms of competitive versus paternalistic race relations. How far the entire racial structure and what direction these changes will take depends on the specific historical circumstances in each case. Here we shall attempt to indicate the nature and direction of these changes in the South African case.

It will be remembered that in an earlier Chapter we showed how the discovery of minerals disturbed the agrarian distinction between colonizer and colonized insofar as it was symbolized, amongst other factors, by ownership of land. Though we noted the presence of bywoners the above ideal typical characterization of colonial land ownership patterns can be regarded as, by and large, valid. Now the long process of rural dislocation which began with the land speculations in the late nineteenth century reached its peak during the depression when many settlers were forced to seek urban employment.

What is most interesting in the South African case is that the victims of this structural dislocation were as 'culturally unprepared' as the colonized Africans for entering modern industry. Though there were hardly any formal barriers against the Afrikaners' mobility the whole burden of their cultural and ideological heritage put them at a competitive disadvantage compared with their British and Jewish fellow settlers. In 1936 only 44% of the Afrikaner population were urbanized. Besides, they constituted the core of what came to be called the poor white problem. So in terms of the narrower category of economic class (relationship to the means of production) the impoverished settler had much in common with his dispossessed African counterpart. At this point one could talk of a theoretical possibility of groups merging across the colonial colour line in much the same way that the Khoi Khoi had merged with the emancipated slaves to form the Cape Coloured people.

Now the fact that South African society remains an essentially racially stratified social order should not lead us into concluding that the colonial pattern of race relations which was established in the pre-industrial period has remained intact throughout the long process of industrialization which has been going on for nearly a century now. In fact we would argue that it would be sociological anomaly for drastic economic change to occur as it were in separation from the other aspects of the society. Now two views of the racial patterning of South African society seem to operate with this premise and in different directions lead to the conclusion, namely, the incompatibility of the racial structure which is seen to emanate from an outmoded polity with the fairly advanced capitalist economic order. One approach views the racial

patterning of the society as a capitalist plot to divide the working class and thus blunt its revolutionary potential for organizing on non-racial grounds and overthrowing capitalist exploitation. Another approach sees present day racial legislation as an anachronistic attempt to revive old-fashioned paternalistic race relations(master-servant) of the old pre-industrial order.

While the first approach can be criticized on the grounds that it has the tendency to disregard what we might call the ever present colonial legacy of inter-group relations, the second approach fails to see this apparent revivalism as deriving specifically from the dynamics of colonial capitalist industrialization and as such as a pseudo-revivalism of inter-group combat that cannot be dismissed as merely anachronistic and outmoded. The view that apartheid is a reactionary, anachronistic attempt to revive the 'Golden Age' of the Boer republics can rightly be termed a 'survival' view insofar as it sees the modern version of South African racial domination as something from an old past which has been superseded by the industrialization process. This 'survival' thesis shares with what may be called the "delayed-action" thesis the basic assertion of the contradiction between a presumably colour-blind capitalist economic order and a racial political order. The latter differs from the former in that whereas the survival view stresses the impending doom of the system because of the failure of the polity to adapt itself to a changed economy, the delayed-action view asserts that whereas the present stage of capitalist industrialization has been achieved without changing the racial order a hypothetical advanced stage of industrialization may yet see a different racial order, thus

reverting to the same deterministic thinking which is the object of Blumer's illuminating but static critique.

Basic to all the theoretical controversy about the nature of the South African form of domination is the undisputable fact that drastic changes have taken place since the days when the ox-wagon was the sole symbol of economic prosperity. The controversy can be seen as being on two levels. The one is a general level which centers around the assumption that economic change of an industrializing nature causes changes in the sphere of race relations. Blumer's critique is on this level. The second level can be seen as a more specific development of the first assumption, namely, that because economic change has taken place without concomitant change in race relations as embodied in the political structure there exists a tension between the economy and the polity in present day South Africa. This latter view is based on two distinct but interrelated assumptions which can be described as 1. A version of economic determinism; and 2. a colour-blind capitalism.

Now while the Blumer thesis is mainly a reaction against these assumptions its weakness lies in the fact that it abstracts the racial order from the economic order and this process of abstraction leads to an anomalous position of a static racial order which contains within it dynamic economic developments. The way in which we perceive the changes that have occurred in South African society since the discovery of minerals there is central to our characterization of present-day South African society as either a plural society; a caste society; a form of domestic colonialism; a pragmatic oligarchy; a racially structured form of capitalist parasitism; or simply as a version of colonial capitalism that has matured into a

form of fascism.

Recent developments in the sociology of composite societies have led to the resuscitation and elaboration of the theory of pluralism. Needless to say, South African society, with its colonial legacy of diverse racial and ethnic groups is taken to be an outstanding example of a plural society. For instance Kuper<sup>4</sup> maintains that the colonial societies established by western industrial powers in Africa and the white settler societies of Africa present extreme forms of cultural pluralism. However, for anyone who attempts to assess the usefulness of the concept of pluralism in the understanding of South African society two problems immediately arise. One is the confusion that surrounds the concept, the other is the absence of a systematic and clear application of this concept to that society. These difficulties remain intractable despite the fact that the two sociologists who are the leading analysts of South African society, namely, Pierre van den Berghe and Leo Kuper, are also among the leading exponents of the theory of pluralism. We shall deal with their contributions later.

Now in its original formulation by Furnivall the theory can be said to have limited value for the understanding of the dynamics of a fairly highly industrialized society like South Africa. He wrote:

In Burma, as in Java, probably the first thing that strikes the visitor is the medley of peoples - European, Chinese, Indian and native. It is the strictest sense a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its

---

<sup>4</sup> Kuper, L. O. Smith, M. G. Pluralism in Africa.

own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society with the different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit. Even in the economic sphere there is a division of labour along racial lines. Natives, Chinese, Indians and Europeans all have different functions, and within each major group subsections have particular occupations. There is, as it were, a caste system, but without the religious basis that incorporates castes in social life in India.<sup>5</sup>

This initial statement of the problem is extremely important in view of the fact that a lot of the theorizing that has followed Furnivall, though mildly critical of the details of his scheme, has in fact adopted his general perspective. For instance most analyses of South Africa which operate with the concept of pluralism see it as divided into racial sections giving rise to stratification on two levels, namely, inter and intra-group stratification. Or more specifically in Van den Berghe's<sup>6</sup> case as a system of racial castes in the sense of the Warner-Dollard model adapted to cope with the presence of the Coloured and Indian people.

Furnivall saw the plural society as a specific type resulting from the colonial encounter. Thus the common value system which is assumed to be the basis of social stability by most functionalist theorists is absent in the plural society hence in the absence of a 'common social will' the society is held together mainly by pressure exerted from outside by the mother country. Further, in the absence of what he calls 'social demand' individual competition in the economic

---

<sup>5</sup> Furnivall, J. S. Colonial Policy and Practice, p. 304

<sup>6</sup> Van den Berghe, P. South Africa (A Study in Conflict), and Race, Class and Ethnicity in South Africa in Plotnicov, L. and Tuden, A. ed. Stratification in Africa.



sphere results in a society in which "economic forces are abnormally and unhealthily predominant". Thus the most obvious characteristic is that the tension between classes with conflicting economic interests is aggravated in the plural society by corresponding cleavage on racial lines.

While Furnivall's point about the lack of a common value system has been taken up by critics of the Parsonian model of a consensus-based social system for instance, some of his insights have been neglected. His point about a society in which "economic forces become unhealthily predominant" may point to the brutal nature of the forms of capitalist exploitation in the colonial setting. The persistence of versions of forced labour can be regarded as a reflection of the specific nature of inter-group and inter-class relations in these societies. Such a view would lead to an analysis of the racial aspects of the exploitation as an economic fact rather than as deriving from a source outside the economy.

However, a development Furnivall's insight in this direction would also have to confront the fact that these forms of harsh exploitation are maintained and reinforced by the use of political mechanisms. It would also show that it is misleading to talk about some kind of laissez-faire market which acts as a major catalyst for a form of antagonistic integration since market relations in a colonial conquest situation also reflect the relations of super and sub-ordination between groups.

To return to the central aspect of the Furnivall thesis, namely, the fact that ethnic groups 'mix but do not combine', we may note that he runs into difficulties as he himself observed when he wrote:

In a confederation secession is at least possible without the total disruption of all social bonds, whereas in a plural society the elements are so intermingled that secession is identical with anarchy ... in Netherlands India the European, Chinaman and Native are linked as vitally as Siamese twins and, if rent asunder, every element in the union must dissolve in anarchy. Yet they are so far from having any common will that among the natives, the order most powerful numerically, there is pressure for dissolution of the tie even at the risk of anarchy<sup>7</sup>.

In order to assess the value of Furnivall's concept of pluralism we have to go beyond the purely descriptive level on which most discussion of these problems has remained and ask the strictly sociological question as to why members of his plural segments mix but do not combine. It would seem that his answer to this question lies in the fact of the diversity of cultures hence the absence of a 'social will' or a 'social demand'. Unlike Durkheim<sup>8</sup> who saw in capitalist market transactions and the division of labour a basis for organic solidarity perhaps more thorough going than the mechanical solidarity of resemblance resulting from cultural uniformity, Furnivall seems to regard cultural diversity as the defining feature of his plural society.

Most critics of Furnivall and M. G. Smith's earlier formulation of the problem in cultural terms have pointed out that it is misleading to pose the question in terms of culture. Hoetink,<sup>9</sup> for instance, has argued that the almost complete 'sociological apartheid' which corresponds with cultural diversity is a feature of only the early stages

---

<sup>7</sup> Furnivall, J. S. Netherlands India, p. 447

<sup>8</sup> Durkheim, E. The Division of Labour in Society.

<sup>9</sup> Hoetink, H. The Two Variants in Caribbean Race Relations.

of conquest.<sup>10</sup> Braithwaite in his own criticism of Smith maintains that "the problem of the plural society is indeed a problem of the social structure posed by the existence of marked differences in culture ..."

It is doubtful whether even Braithwaite's formulation of the problem is useful in understanding the nature of present-day South African society, let alone Furnivall's and Smith's culturologism. It would be very difficult to sustain the thesis that cultural differences are either the main basis or the main determinants of either class position or the distribution of political power in that society though such a theory would warrant serious consideration in a hypothetical situation of racial stratification in which cultural boundaries coincided with racial ones. However, as Wertheim,<sup>11</sup> among others, has pointed out, it is often the case that the more the native population assimilate western culture the more the settlers insist on their racial superiority and exclusiveness. Mayer's<sup>12</sup> 'Reds' and 'school people' encounter the same forms of discrimination despite the apparent cultural cleavage that exists between them; indeed the settlers often assert their racist 'preference' for the 'raw' kaffir. Moreover, the case of the Coloured community whose culture is in no significant manner different from that of the ruling whites can be taken as a good refutation of the cultural pluralism thesis.

---

<sup>10</sup> Braithwaite, L. "Social Stratification and Cultural Pluralism" *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 83, Articles 5, 1960, pp. 16-36

<sup>11</sup> Wertheim, W. F. Indonesian Society in Transition.

<sup>12</sup> Mayer, P. Townsmen or Tribesmen.

The above critical considerations have led van den Berghe to caution that "the phenomenon of culture contact must be clearly distinguished, both analytically and empirically from the other elements of South African society." It seems to us that while it is important to point out the cultural heterogeneity of South African society as most anthropological studies have done, what is more important from the point of view of the understanding of the overall social structure is the way in which the ruling class there uses and manipulates real and imagined cultural differences to justify the political subordination and economic exploitation of the black groups. Heribert Adam<sup>13</sup> has shown how the legitimizing ideological principle of the apartheid policy is more and more shifting from the assertion of racial superiority and inferiority to that of cultural diversity. However, it must be noted that the racist component of this scheme is not removed even by this subtle ideological shift since what it does is to translate cultural differences to the extent that they are real to immutable genetic characteristics. In fact what the exponents of apartheid understand by African culture amounts to witchcraft, poverty and ignorance. Thus, besides the usual criticism that cultural pluralism directs our attention away from the important areas of economy and polity there is also the danger of mistaking the ideology of the ruling group for objective fact since in colonial conflict situations ideological rationalizations are often stated in cultural terms.

---

<sup>13</sup>

Adam, H. Modernizing Racial Domination

A related concept is that of caste which has been loosely applied to the South African version of race relations. Historians and Anthropologists refer to the South African caste system in what may be regarded as a 'layman's manner. However, even serious sociological analyses operate with this concept. For instance, van den Berghe<sup>14</sup> in his chapter on Culture and Status has written:

For broad descriptive purposes, the South African system of stratification can be described in terms of caste and class, as Warner, Dollard, Myrdal, and other authors dealing with the United States have done.

However, it is not his intention to reopen the debate on the use of the term 'caste' in a racial context as "the discussion is largely one of definition." He therefore adopts "a minimum definition of 'caste' as an endogamous group, hierarchically ranked in relation to other groups, and wherein membership is determined by birth and for life." He thus sees South African society as consisting of four racial castes and each of these as subdivided according to the usual criteria of a western class system. .

Now this approach raises a number of problems. Most of these derive from the fact that the debate on the applicability of the concept of caste to race relations situations is not, as van den Berghe asserts, purely one of definition. The first question to ask is what the author means by a minimum definition of the concept. In other words is the concept 'racial caste' or 'colour caste' to be taken as a variant of 'religious caste' or some other form of caste? If

---

<sup>14</sup>

Van den Berghe, P. op. cit. p.52.

this is the case what are the implications of this new variant of the concept for the understanding of social structure in general, for, caste as an analytical tool for the understanding of Hindu society does not refer solely to the religious aspect of inter-group relations but to the patterning of the entire social structure, namely, relations of super and subordination, occupational specialization, the rigidity of the boundaries between groups, and above all, to the degree of consensus about the legitimacy of these arrangements.

Van den Berghe's criteria are endogamy, ascribed status and hierarchical arrangement of groups. It is obvious that no social structure can be properly understood if it is defined solely in the above terms. The obfuscating aspect of any caste-pluralistic approach to the study of South African society lies in the fact of the relegation of class analysis to a subordinate role with the tendency to see it applicable to relations within the groups or so-called castes. It is significant that van den Berghe utilizes the concept of colour-caste only in his section on stratification understood as culture and status and does not sustain it in the section that should be the centre of any sensitive analysis of stratification, namely polity and economy.

Elsewhere the author has asserted that the four castes are clearly a hierarchy of power, wealth and prestige. "Each race has a legally defined set of privileges or disabilities. Wide differences in standards of living, formal education, health, occupation, and wages accompany the vastly unequal distribution of power and wealth ..." However, in the same context the author rightly points out that the caste-perspective is indeed a partial one. He states:

South Africa is probably the most complex and the most conflict-ridden of the world's multi-racial societies. The most salient lines of cleavage are those of race. According to the dominant group's definition of the situation, the society is divided into four rigid colour castes ... 15

Indeed a caste society that had to resort to so-called fascist means of repression in order to remain stable would be a sociological anomaly.

It is interesting that Kuper, though he does refer to the caste-class model in his An African Bourgeoisie in the following passage

Class perspectives are conceived under apartheid as compatible with tribalism, the Government holding out the promise of unrestricted occupational opportunity within the tribal framework. The model is like that applied by the so-called 'caste-Class' school of sociologists to American society, with imperiable barriers between castes (races), but class differentiation and mobility within each separate caste,<sup>16</sup>

he does not use the concept in his analysis of stratification in plural societies.

We have seen that the related concepts of cultural pluralism and caste not only concentrate on the ruling class's definition of the situation but, perhaps by the same token, also direct our attention away from a thorough analysis of the social structures or at best lead to a superficial analysis. In fact it is very interesting that these two concepts should be found useful in the analysis of the same society notwithstanding the fact that whereas pluralism indicates the absence of anything like what has been vaguely described as a common value

---

15

Van den Berghe, P. Race and Racism, p. 101.

16

Kuper, Leo, An African Bourgeoisie (Race, Class, and Politics) p. 89.

system caste generally presupposes a state of consensus which presupposes that very value system which is supposed to be lacking in plural societies.

A slightly more sophisticated concept which has emerged out of the whole confusing discussion of pluralism is that of differential incorporation. M. G. Smith<sup>17</sup> has developed this concept presumably to counteract the deficiencies of his earlier formulation of the pluralist framework. One such deficiency was the definition of society in cultural terms. He uses this concept to depict cases of structural pluralism as distinct from, but presupposing, what he describes as cultural and social pluralism. Thus he distinguishes three levels or modes of pluralism.

Cultural pluralism consists solely of institutional differences to which no corporate social differences attach. Social pluralism is the condition in which such institutional differentiations coincide with the corporate and virtually closed social sections or segments. Structural pluralism consists further in the differential incorporation of specified collectivities within a given society and corresponds with this in its form, scope, and particulars. It institutes or presupposes social and cultural pluralism together, by prescribing sectional differences of access to the common public domain, and by establishing differing contexts and conditions of sectional coexistence, segregation and subordination.

Smith sees differential incorporation as the opposite of what he calls consociational incorporation which presumably is a situation of group equality, and as a polar opposite of individual incorporation which is also universalistic or uniform incorporation.

---

17

Smith, M. G. and Kuper, L. Pluralism in Africa.



Always wherever differential incorporation prevails, one institutionally distinct section dominates the others, normally for its own advantage, and by various means which may include naked force where this seems necessary. Where this dominant section is a numerical minority of the population as, for example, in the Far Eastern colonies studied by Furnivall, structural pluralism prevails in the extreme form.

Though Smith seems to have moved from a cultural definition of his plural society his concept of differential incorporation still rests on institutional diversity except that he now seems to have adopted van den Berghe's concept of corporate groups while, unlike the latter, he seems to give more weight to numerical strength. Even here M. G. Smith's two weaknesses, namely, the a-historical nature of his framework encompassing pre-colonial African societies and fairly advanced capitalism, and his failure to distinguish the unequal importance of different institutions for the purpose of sociological analysis, are only too evident.

The second weakness can be clearly seen if we take a close look at the following statement:

Moreover, since its status and dominion are bound up with the maintenance and scope of this intersectional structure, the dominant section in such societies normally seeks not only to preserve its current control, but to enhance this by promoting further institutional and structural differentiations in other spheres, notably cult, connubium, economy, education, military organization and residential organization.

Now the singling out of the political sphere as a starting point in the analysis of the structure of composite societies or any society for that matter cannot be seriously queried. However, the way Smith seems to view economy just as another institution is, to say the least, disturbing. In fact an undogmatic thesis may be sustained along the lines that the monopoly of political power (Smith's criterion of differential

Always wherever differential incorporation prevails, one institutionally distinct section dominates the others, normally for its own advantage, and by various means which may include naked force where this seems necessary. Where this dominant section is a numerical minority of the population as, for example, in the Far Eastern colonies studied by Furnivall, structural pluralism prevails in the extreme form.

Though Smith seems to have moved from a cultural definition of his plural society his concept of differential incorporation still rests on institutional diversity except that he now seems to have adopted van den Berghe's concept of corporate groups while, unlike the latter, he seems to give more weight to numerical strength. Even here M. G. Smith's two weaknesses, namely, the a-historical nature of his framework encompassing pre-colonial African societies and fairly advanced capitalism, and his failure to distinguish the unequal importance of different institutions for the purpose of sociological analysis, are only too evident.

The second weakness can be clearly seen if we take a close look at the following statement:

Moreover, since its status and dominion are bound up with the maintenance and scope of this intersectional structure, the dominant section in such societies normally seeks not only to preserve its current control, but to enhance this by promoting further institutional and structural differentiations in other spheres, notably cult, connubium, economy, education, military organization and residential organization.

Now the singling out of the political sphere as a starting point in the analysis of the structure of composite societies or any society for that matter cannot be seriously queried. However, the way Smith seems to view economy just as another institution is, to say the least, disturbing. In fact an undogmatic thesis may be sustained along the lines that the monopoly of political power (Smith's criterion of differential

incorporation), the monopoly of the instruments of violence, the differential access to ideas all serve to buttress the dominance of the minority in the economic sphere. Thus the interrelated but distinguishable phenomena of discrimination, segregation, exclusion, and coercion act as mechanisms for expediting and perpetuating the exploitation of the subordinate groups whose members are incorporated into the lower and most menial rungs of the economy as rightless migrants.

Kuper<sup>18</sup> utilizes the concept of differential incorporation in his discussion of stratification in plural societies especially the white settler societies of Africa. He uses the analogy of the joint stock company "with its differential incorporation of categories of stockholders." He notes that "the forms of this incorporation are exceedingly varied - slavery, serfdom, tributary relations, castes, estates, and parliamentary systems". "The differentially incorporated groups generally have different cultures and are of different racial or ethnic stock. In an extreme form of plural society structural divisions coincide with cultural and racial or ethnic divisions."

Accordingly, he sees differential incorporation in the central political system as the primary basis of stratification in white settler societies. "To an appreciable extent there is determinism by political factors." Further, political incorporation

18

Kuper, L. "Stratification in Plural Societies. Focus on White Settler Societies in Africa." in Plotnicov L. and Tuden, A. Essays in Social Stratification, pp. 77-93

is certainly central to the system of stratification and is so perceived by both white settlers and native peoples. Restratification is essentially a struggle between subordinate groups seeking to change the terms of political incorporation and dominant groups using the power of the state to maintain differential incorporation.

While Kuper is right in stressing the importance of the fact of access to state power as an important phenomenon of stratification in white settler societies it is doubtful whether the concept of differential incorporation is precise enough to cope with the sharpness of the phenomenon which it purports to deal with. The analogy of the joint stock company would tend to obscure rather than illuminate the central points of the South African system of racial domination. It seems to us that whereas the concept of differential incorporation may be useful in describing the way in which various groups have entered the colonial capitalist industrializing order thus leading to a racially structured mode of exploitation it is completely misleading when applied to the political sphere where the situation of the subordinate groups has changed from one of token incorporation or peripheral participation as embodied in the principle of limited indirect representation to one of total exclusion.

Further, though Kuper is right in seeing the political racial extremism as a product of capitalistic competition and thus as a weapon of inter-group combat he still shares the wider optimism of the Lipsetian<sup>19</sup> type, namely, that industrialization and expansion will lead to some process of

---

<sup>19</sup>

Lipset, S. Political Man.

democratization expressed in a possibility of a hypothetical advanced stage of industrialization in which "differential incorporation of the racial groups in the political structure might be progressively abolished by a system of constitutional reforms." Thus behind the attractive concept of differential incorporation lie unproven assumptions about the nature of the relationship between polity and economy as well as conjectures about the unlimited expansion potential of the South African economy.

For ourselves the recognition of the fact of the importance of political power in the structuring of racial group economic opportunities would lead to further enquiry about the usefulness of definitions of class and potential class action based on assumptions of purely economically determined life chances or relationship to the means of production. This again highlights the peculiarity of the South African form of capitalist racial exploitation and domination. We shall return to this problem at a later stage.

Another concept that has recently been introduced in the discussion of South African society is that of 'pragmatic oligarchy'. Heribert Adam has used this concept to describe and understand the apartheid system as well as "to explain and predict to a certain extent, the direction in which settler colonialism is likely to develop." He prefers it to the other four main conceptual schemes used to analyze the system, namely; cultural pluralism; totalitarianism; colonial imperialism; and various theories of fascism, especially as far as they focus on the race ideology of National Socialism.

Thus:

If one tries to define the political structure of this officially propagated pluralism in terms of a single concept, then the term race-

oligarchy would seem to be adequate to describe South Africa's system of domination. A comparison with the caste structure is also useful. A racially defined and privileged minority caste rules autocratically over the caste hierarchy, which, however, does not accept this system unchallenged. This oligarchic domination is neither totalitarian in the usual meaning of the term nor fascist.<sup>20</sup>

Unfortunately this concept, though advanced as a 'key concept', is not systematically developed by the author except in a negative fashion, namely, in a critique of comparisons of South Africa with national socialism.

The structural differences between Hitler's Germany and South Africa make a comparison of both societies under the concept of fascism a-historical and rather useless. The specific new feature of Apartheid, the flexible and pragmatic domination over a racially separated majority, are overlooked. Furthermore such a comparative attempt does not come to grips with an adequate theory of fascism which has to be more than an analysis of ideology or a personalized description of dictatorial rule.<sup>21</sup>

Be that as it may, it would seem to us (a priori) that the concept pragmatic oligarchy, because of its narrow reference to the policies of the dominant minority, more specifically the Afrikaner nationalists, is much too restricted to throw light on the entire social structure of modern South Africa. The very label 'pragmatic' is expressive of practice rather than a delineation of structure. Hence it would seem more useful to explain why the South African oligarchy is pragmatic unlike other oligarchies which are presumably not, rather than assert this as a key concept. In other words the concept pragmatic oligarchy cannot of its own give us a clue to the nature of the system of domination, it has to refer back

---

<sup>20</sup> Adam, H. op. cit. p. 42

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 52

to the underlying cause of this alleged pragmatism.

Again the pragmatism of the South African race oligarchy makes more sense in contrast to fanatical fascist rule with which it shares its reliance on racist presuppositions.

While the content of racial beliefs is always irrational, propagated as a justification for existing privileges or, as in anti-Semitism, adopted as a fictitious explanation for economic frustrations, this irrationality does not necessarily characterize the implementation of racial discrimination, which can be 'rational' and efficient with respect to its intended purposes. It is precisely this means-end rationality that seems the decisive new feature of South Africa's version of racialism. This pragmatism treats racial and related historical experiences only with reference to practical lessons. It overrides the ideological implications of racial beliefs and is oriented solely towards the purpose of the system: the smooth, frictionless, and tolerable domination over cheap labour and political dependents as a requisite for privileges of the minority.<sup>22</sup>

Though it cannot be denied that the development of a vast repressive machinery has contributed to the present stability of the South African social order Adam sees two other factors as having been decisive, namely, an unexpected economic boom, and the partial successes of the programme of separate development. In his own words "it is not only the development of the country into a democratic police state that secures white supremacy. Given the numerical ratio, increased terror by the white minority would have enhanced the likelihood of a revolutionary upheaval."<sup>23</sup> While it would be naive to argue against the view that white supremacy in South Africa rests on other factors than the thorough system of state terror that

---

<sup>22</sup>

Ibid. p. 67

<sup>23</sup>

Ibid. p. 67

has been developed there a corrective is necessary here. The question of the likelihood of a revolutionary upheaval is only slightly connected with the numerical ratios. It is thus very naive to assert that because of the racial ratio increased terror on the part of the whites would automatically increase the prospect of a revolutionary upheaval among the terrorized. The latter prospect would depend on a host of other factors including the state of political consciousness of the oppressed and above all the balance of strength expressed not only in terms of instruments of violence but also in possibilities for organization which may be adversely affected by the very factor which Adam sees as a catalyst for revolution namely minority white terror.

However, the strength of the argument which stresses the pragmatic nature of the South African system of domination lies in what Adam has called the partial successes of the programme of separate development. Thus:

Any analysis which focuses only on the repressive aspects of the South African race system overlooks the new elements of the pragmatic oligarchy. These are most clearly embodied in the utopian aspects of Apartheid from which the traditional race separation can be distinguished. Though admittedly a sham from the point of view of the distribution of power, the programme of separate development - Afrikaner domestic neocolonialism - has been partially successful through psychological impact.

The two aspects of this success are "the compensation for absence of real political rights by so-called local self-governing bodies, and the increase of non-white fragmentation through the separation of the population groups."<sup>24</sup> These two success claims deserve serious consideration because the whole notion of separate development has always been dismissed as a sham by serious commentators on South Africa.



Now Adam claims that local self-government compensates for the absence of real power. While this may be so for the class of comprador-bureaucrats who man the machinery of Bantustan administration, however, this group has never represented a cross-section of African opinion on the issue of political rights. It is interesting that even these avowed supporters of apartheid have to strive to keep a measure of credibility by making claims that are considered impertinent by their sponsors. We shall have to return to the whole question of the significance of the Bantustan programme. However, we have to agree with Adam on the question of the fragmentation of the subordinate groups with the following qualification, namely, that the enforced fragmentation on its own though probably weakening the objective strength of the groups vis-a-vis the dominant whites does not of its own contribute to a more favourable attitude towards Government policy. For instance, it may be argued that the effect of the policy of separation on the Coloured community has been to strengthen anti-white feeling as a result of the strict Government insistence on their non-white status.

More serious is Adam's claim that the South African system is no longer characterised by racism. "The tendency toward greater rationality in the implementation of domination has been preceded in the ideology by a focus on social and cultural traditions instead of dubious biological assertions." In this connection cocktail parties with black dignitaries become very important, and shaking hands with so-called tribal chiefs and perhaps more important is the waiving of rigid racial discrimination in the field of sport though it may be stated that the latter form of tokenism is still on such a small scale as to be almost without any significance.

Now Adam claims that local self-government compensates for the absence of real power. While this may be so for the class of comprador-bureaucrats who man the machinery of Bantustan administration, however, this group has never represented a cross-section of African opinion on the issue of political rights. It is interesting that even these avowed supporters of apartheid have to strive to keep a measure of credibility by making claims that are considered impertinent by their sponsors. We shall have to return to the whole question of the significance of the Bantustan programme. However, we have to agree with Adam on the question of the fragmentation of the subordinate groups with the following qualification, namely, that the enforced fragmentation on its own though probably weakening the objective strength of the groups vis-a-vis the dominant whites does not of its own contribute to a more favourable attitude towards Government policy. For instance, it may be argued that the effect of the policy of separation on the Coloured community has been to strengthen anti-white feeling as a result of the strict Government insistence on their non-white status.

More serious is Adam's claim that the South African system is no longer characterised by racism. "The tendency toward greater rationality in the implementation of domination has been preceded in the ideology by a focus on social and cultural traditions instead of dubious biological assertions." In this connection cocktail parties with black dignitaries become very important, and shaking hands with so-called tribal chiefs and perhaps more important is the waiving of rigid racial discrimination in the field of sport though it may be stated that the latter form of tokenism is still on such a small scale as to be almost without any significance.

The inherited inferiority was a matter of mere belief, fictitious and constantly refuted by experience to the contrary; but the reference to cultural pluralism has indeed a real basis, especially since it is promoted by the forced separation of an ethnocentric policy. This policy no longer requires traditional ideological rationalization: Its justification is demonstrated by its very existence.<sup>25</sup>

Two factors are seen as responsible for this ideological shift, namely, the fact of the economic advances made by the Afrikaners since their seizure of state power in 1948 has led to a section of them being alienated from the white laager political base; secondly, the Bantustan programme itself has necessitated this shift. Yet as late as 1968 when the Transkei had been in the status of a Bantustan for five years the Commissioner-General for the Xhosa National Unit, Hans Abraham could tell a group of industrialists on an official tour that the problem with the Transkei "is that the Xhosa has no initiative, no organizational ability, no judgement, no responsibility ... and he is obsessed with sex."<sup>26</sup> In another context the author has himself written that

It is so common in South Africa to view social conditions in biological categories that socio-economic and historical-cultural circumstances are hardly conceived as possible reasons for different patterns of behaviour.

Thus 90% of his power elite rejected the statement that

Between the white man and the Bantu there is no difference in ability the difference lies in opportunities provided.<sup>27</sup>

However, Adam views this as a case of paternalism which is presumably a case of racialism without racism. In this respect Paulo Freire has shown how paternalism is in fact the worst

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p. 71

<sup>26</sup> Hans Abrahams quoted in Molteno The Transkei as a Bantustan.

<sup>27</sup> Adam, H. ed. South Africa: Sociological Perspectives, pp. 79-80

form of racism.<sup>28</sup>

Our scepticism about the concept of pragmatic oligarchy does not mean a refutation of the assertion that the system of domination in South Africa is indeed quite rational from the point of view of the ruling class there. As far as we are concerned this rationality is not so recent a development. However, Adam, because he adheres to this narrow concept is led to a conclusion that seems to us much too simplistic.

This elastic, 'rational' race-nationalism is capable of internal liberalization, in contrast to the irrational national socialism in Europe. Such a development does not preclude the outbreak of violent conflicts, but it makes them less likely. Above all the rational racial domination is most likely to falsify the assumption that mounting internal tension will make a violent revolutionary change inevitable.<sup>29</sup>

Now in reacting against the cataclysmic view of future developments in South Africa, Adam concentrates on the utopian aspects of the so-called programme of separate development. Yet even what he regards as the success of this programme cannot be regarded as indicative of any self-liberalization potential of the system. The mass removals that have taken place over the past decade and the mounting repressive legislation, the more totalitarian measures like the formation of the Bureau of State Security, the attacks on the last vestiges of multi-racial liberalism as represented by the National Union of Students and some Bishops and the English section of the press, the increasing expenditure on defence all make nonsense of any tokenism that may have been shown in the last few years. This leads to the conclusion that any amount of flexibility that

---

<sup>28</sup>

Freire, Paulo Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

<sup>29</sup>

Adam, op. cit. p. 181

the system may show is one that is motivated not by any notion of liberalization but by the self-confidence of white supremacy. The clear lesson is that sociologists have to dispense with the naive optimistic view that capitalist economic expansion has some internal imperative towards bourgeois democracy.

It seems to us that the present failure of most of the sociological theorizing on South African society to come to grips with the nature of the system of domination that has been developed there is a result of what may be crudely described as a tendency to look at the system through European eyes. In other words theorists (sometimes much against their declared assumptions about the peculiarity and complexity of this society) take as their unstated ideal-type what they regard as a normal western-type capitalist society. From this premise these theorists somehow fail to understand the denial of what they regard as civil liberties and basic democratic rights to the majority of the population there. On the other hand within the white section of the population things look quite normal, elections are held, there is a parliamentary opposition, there is an opposition press, the judiciary is well known for its impartiality, in short dissent is tolerated. This apparent contrast between freedom and bondage existing side by side within a fairly highly industrialized capitalist society has given rise to apparently self contradictory characterizations like 'Herrenvolk democracy' or 'democratic police state'.

A closely related factor is the underlying concern with the problem of change in that society. The question of the necessity of change becomes at one and the same time a matter of moral desirability and sociological necessity. The former derives from a standpoint of elementary humanism, the other from what can be called the anomalies of the social

structure. This general problem of change has another dimension, namely, the specific nature which such change will take - violent and non-violent forms. The writings of Leo Kuper for instance display a fading hope for non-violent change through the process of individuation or the pressure of third parties like the United Nations for example. However, this prospect is seen as dim though real in view of "the strong pressures toward racialism and revolutionary violence." Van den Berghe concluded his own study with the statement that "A South Africa divided against itself awaits its impending doom." Adam has detected an 'elasticity' that may lead to internal liberalization. Thus apartheid is seen either as a "living political dinosaur" or just simply an aberration.

It seems to us that most of these difficulties derive from the a-historical nature of most of the theorizing on South Africa. Indeed there is a lot of lip-service to the importance of a historical approach to the sociological study of South African society which usually takes the form of one chapter. Van den Berghe has warned against a "new wave of sterile historicism" that may result from the immense complexity of South African society. However, the attempt to understand South African society should not be subordinated to a wider aim of building an all comprehensive general sociological theory by synthesizing functionalism with elements of conflict derived from a so-called Hegelian dialectic. In this respect Gunder Frank<sup>30</sup> has pointed out how futile van den Berghe's attempt at synthesis is.

---

30

Frank, A. G. 'Functionalism and Dialectics' in Latin America - Under-development or Revolution pp. 95-107.

A serious historical-sociological approach to the study of South African society would begin by placing that society in its true historical context, namely the expansion of European societies which has culminated in the present world-scale hegemony of western capitalism. In terms of the fate of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, Africa, and Asia, this process of European expansion has meant a continuum of severity ranging from complete extermination via slavery to political subjugation and various forms of economic exploitation. In fact South African society, like most other societies which are essentially creations of the above process has seen in its historical development all forms of group fate and these have left their impact on the present social structure of that country. As we have shown in an earlier Chapter, slavery formed the basis of production throughout the rule of the Dutch East India Company till it was formally abolished in the early 1830's. Extermination was the fate of the San, while a version of serfdom was the plight of the Khoi Khoi until they merged with descendants of the settlers and the slaves to form the present Cape Coloured people. While the present social order may be seen primarily as a direct result of the political subjugation of the Bantu speaking people it has clear marks of the other group fates. Looked at from this angle, apartheid as a variant of world-wide white supremacy looks less of a mystery and aberration. In fact the beneficiaries of the South African version of capitalist exploitation include international firms spearheaded by British capital. So what we see today is a supposedly morally abominable social order buttressed by and paying huge dividends to foreign capital investment.

The above general remarks are relevant to the understanding of South African society whose primary feature is a capitalist economy which is a preserve of the white minority especially the English section based on cheap non-white labour provided by the rightless subordinate groups. This social order marks itself off from other racially stratified societies by its rigidity, and marks itself off from other capitalist systems by its suspension of what is usually referred to as a free market. Both factors underlie a system of racial domination whose rigidity has solicited the label 'caste' and whose ruthlessness has invited comparison with European Fascism. This duality which is the kernel of the system is typically represented in van den Berghe's<sup>31</sup> work as a means versus ends dilemma whereby a 'racial-caste' apartheid system has to resort to fascist means in order to bring about an outdated 'Golden Age' of Boer paternalism as embodied in an ideal-typical form in the 19th century republics. Or similarly as an 'industrial capitalism versus racial regimentation contradiction' by the Simons<sup>32</sup> whose major theoretical proposition is that "an industrialized, capitalist society can perpetuate pre-industrial social rigidities only by adopting the coercive techniques of fascist totalitarianism."

We have already argued that the caste-perspective is misleading and superficial while expressing scepticism about the view that the present version of racial domination as represented in the theory of apartheid is anachronistic and

31

Van den Berghe, P. ed. "Apartheid, Fascism and the Golden Age" in Africa - Social Problems of Change and Conflict.

32

Simons, H. J. and R. E. Class and Colour in South Africa.



revivalist. We have also queried the view that sees it as elastic and thus capable of self-liberalization. We may note at this point that the process of liberalization in western societies took place in the form of what has been referred to as the incorporation of the working classes and women into the political process and the institutionalization of collective bargaining in the industrial field as well as the formation of the welfare state. The above developments have led some theorists to assert that all the crucial problems have been resolved in these societies except petty squabbles about how much share of the national cake various groups receive. It is a platitude to state that these developments were neither inherent in capitalism itself nor a result of the generosity of the ruling classes but a result of struggle which has left the capitalist mode of production and capitalist social relations more or less intact. In other words capitalism has been able to accommodate these changes without endangering its own existence and strength. Now it is very doubtful that this process of liberalization is feasible without the transcendence of the apartheid version of capitalist exploitation. In other words the granting of elementary political rights and trade union rights to the subordinate groups in South Africa would destroy that particular version of capitalism whose essence is monopoly of political power by the minority.

Now this brings us to the problem of fascism and the analysis of the South African version of domination. It has been pointed out over and over that the fact that most of the top members of the ruling National Party were pro-Nazi sympathisers during the hegemony of national socialism in Germany does not on its own make present-day South Africa a

fascist society. The same observation is true of racism - as van den Berghe, amongst others, has pointed out, there are many systems which display racism without being fascist. More germane is the observation that fascism requires the mobilization of the entire society behind a charismatic leader whose rule is legitimated by the fact of its existence. Thus it would seem, a priori, that the colonial setting where the majority are excluded from political participation would be a barren soil for the seeds of fascism. Yet the resemblance between the nationalist mode of rule and that of the nazis has led to an a-historical comparison between the two and the characterization of South African domination as fascist.

Against such strictures Adam has written that

the structural differences between Hitler's Germany and South Africa make a comparison of both societies under the concept of fascism a historical and rather useless. The specific new feature of Apartheid, the flexible and pragmatic domination over a racially separated majority, are overlooked. Furthermore, such a comparative attempt does not come to grips with an adequate theory of fascism which has to be more than an analysis of ideology or a personalized description of dictatorial rule. Propagandistic labels cannot replace a thorough sociological analysis of new forms of domination that are far more sophisticated and rational than the dogmatic view is able to detect.<sup>33</sup>

Yet a rejection of the dogmatic view as a-historical cannot be based on either the assertion that this new form of domination is rational and flexible as against the irrational European fascist regimes or the contention that totalitarian means are used to implement a programme that is

itself utopian reactionary hence unworkable because it is old-fashioned. The fault with the former view is that it is based on a narrow and untenable view of the phenomenon of fascism as a form of collective madness and a lapse into the irrational. It would be naive to expect fascist domination outside the specific European context and after the defeat of Hitlerism, and in the era of decolonization to operate with tenets like lebensraum which are only traceable to the specific social configurations of post-first world war Europe. Yet right-wing reaction has never been a European monopoly and comparative work has to be on a more general structural level and more specifically in the juxtaposition of classes and groups in conflict situations. Right-wing reaction produces Fascism, Nazism and variations of them which are variations, not because they contain external characteristics differing from those of their Italian and German models, but because they belong, as it were, to different forms and stages of development in the history of each nation, dependent on the problems which at any given moment the governing class had to solve if it were to survive and strengthen its own position. In such cases right-wing reaction resorts to reactionary solutions which are more or less copied from the classical models - the regimes of Hitler and Mussolini - but each solution is, one might say, in direct proportion to the existing possibilities or the prevailing needs of the groups which make the final decision.

Nor can sociological analysis proceed as if there was any measure of consensus about the phenomenon of

itself utopian reactionary hence unworkable because it is old-fashioned. The fault with the former view is that it is based on a narrow and untenable view of the phenomenon of fascism as a form of collective madness and a lapse into the irrational. It would be naive to expect fascist domination outside the specific European context and after the defeat of Hitlerism, and in the era of decolonization to operate with tenets like lebensraum which are only traceable to the specific social configurations of post-first world war Europe. Yet right-wing reaction has never been a European monopoly and comparative work has to be on a more general structural level and more specifically in the juxtaposition of classes and groups in conflict situations. Right-wing reaction produces Fascism, Nazism and variations of them which are variations, not because they contain external characteristics differing from those of their Italian and German models, but because they belong, as it were, to different forms and stages of development in the history of each nation, dependent on the problems which at any given moment the governing class had to solve if it were to survive and strengthen its own position. In such cases right-wing reaction resorts to reactionary solutions which are more or less copied from the classical models - the regimes of Hitler and Mussolini - but each solution is, one might say, in direct proportion to the existing possibilities or the prevailing needs of the groups which make the final decision.

Nor can sociological analysis proceed as if there was any measure of consensus about the phenomenon of

fascism even in the European setting. Gilbert Allardyce<sup>34</sup> has observed that different theorists have formulated general theories about fascism that have relevance to only a few specific forms. And such is the variety of fascism that evidence can be gathered to support theories that are themselves in conflict. "Most theories therefore tend to stand or fall in accordance with the movement chosen to demonstrate them...It must be confessed that, in general, historians have agreed to use the term 'fascism' without agreeing how to define it."

At least four strands may be distinguished in the discussion of fascism, namely, the end of liberal society; as totalitarianism; as a revolt against modernism; and as radical form of traditional political protest. Sociologically the most salient general propositions about the kernel of fascist domination are the fact of industrialization from above and what is generally described as two-front opposition. The former factor is seen as resulting in modern unfreedom and the latter as being at the root of a specific mode of domination by the middle strata. The advantage of an analysis along these lines is that the whole problem of fascism is placed within the context of class and group struggles for dominance within capitalism.

Insofar as the economic and realistic political struggle of the middle stratum was mainly directed against large capital, its socio-ideological struggle was above all directed against the labour movement and its proletarian socialism ... The engagement of the middle class on two fronts against both parties to the class struggle became transformed into struggle precisely against the class struggle that threatened to pulverize it between its two fronts ... The class principle itself, class society as a structural model, was a thorn on the side of the middle stratum. The

34

Allardyce, G. ed. The Place of Fascism in European History,  
P. 6

'folk community' and 'corporate ideas were slogans unmistakably directed against the class struggle idea...The brief role of middle strata in big politics is a paradox of social history: a class denies indignantly that it is a class and it carries on a bitter class struggle against the reality and idea of the class struggle.<sup>35</sup>

It will be obvious already that in seeking to spell out the social base of fascism we encounter the fact of the historical specificity of European developments. It is clear from the above quote that the two-front struggle against the class society is firmly based in an industrialized society where the process of class formation has matured into two more or less antagonistic fronts.

Now for South African society the problem of classes defined according to relationship to the means of production as antagonistic blocks is even today quite problematic. The colonial nature of inter-group relations has precluded this development which even in European societies has been realized only in very general terms. So the notion of a middle stratum between two main class protagonists as a European transplant would not be in accordance with South African reality.

However, the 'two-front' opposition as a primary element in the shaping of the social structure has not been a monopoly of fairly homogeneous class societies, nor has it been confined historically to the period of capitalist industrialism. For instance the history of the Boers could be seen as a perpetual 'two-front' opposition, first against the Dutch East India Company officials on the one hand and the indigenous groups on the other. As we pointed out earlier the 'volk' conceptions

that were distorted ideas emanating from the French revolution which were developed in the abortive attempts at republicanism in the 18th century could be fertile soil for fascist ideas though in themselves pre-fascist.

Again on the Eastern frontier where the Boers found themselves locked up in a two-pronged conflict against the Khosas and British imperialism and what they regarded as its 'negropail missionary lackeys'. Their solution to this problem was to trek and create their own republics. This solution came to form the historical basis for the modern myth of Afrikanerdom, namely, the Great Trek. Already this time the conflict on the eastern frontier in conjunction with the legacy of slavery had transformed Boer ethnocentrism into racism which was given a sharp edge by primitive Calvinism. To mistake the racism of the Boer republics for paternalism is to lose sight of racism as a means of inter-group combat which is not a monopoly of industrializing capitalism.

More specifically, the advent of foreign capitalists as a result of the mineral discoveries precipitated a profound crisis for the Transvaal republic in particular. The Boer solution to this was monopoly of political power.

Do not talk to me of gold, the element which brings more dissension and unexpected plagues than benefits in its train. Pray to God, as I am doing, that the curse connected with its coming may not again overshadow our dear land, as it has come to us and our dear children,

implored Kruger. Yet this was a continuation of a process which had started with the discovery of diamonds.

Following the influx from the Orange free state came men of every class and condition, from the colony and from the ships lying in the coast ports. The larger number were of English descent, but hardly a nation in Europe was unrepresented. Black grandsons of Guinea, coast slaves, and natives of every dusky shade varied the show of white faces. Butchers, bakers, sailors, tailors, lawyers, blacksmiths, masons, doctors, carpenters, clerks, gamblers, sextons, labourers, loafers, men of every pursuit and profession ... fell into the stragling procession to the Diamond fields.<sup>36</sup>

However, the real crisis of the Afrikaner as a colonizer came with the dislocation that accompanied the acceleration of capitalist industrialization. The traumatic experiences of the concentration camps set up by the British during the Anglo-Boer war heightened the sense of ethnic identity among the Afrikaners. Thus the attempt at appeasement which was the whole basis of the union in 1910 though supported by the Boer generals Botha and Smuts floundered as early as 1914 when Steyn, Hertzog, Roos, and Malan launched the National Party. The manifesto stated that the party asked the guidance of God and hoped to develop along Christian National lines. The interests of the Union and its people should be put before those of any other party or people. Amongst other things the Party called for freedom of language, historical interpretation, religion, and of customs and morals. It declared that the promotion of spiritual, national and material welfare is the duty and calling of the state. It also called for the supremacy of the Europeans in a spirit of Christian trusteeship and opposed the mixing of races. This was at the outbreak of the first world war and a year after passing of the Land Act.



Though the seeds of the fascist weltanschauung were present in these developments in embryonic form the process of the uprooting of the Afrikaners from their rural setting had not proceeded far enough and the bloody battles between white labour and capital and the mobilization of the black proletariat by the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union still lay in the future. Thus the 1924 coalition between Hertzog and the Labour party though firmly founded on the idea of white supremacy was still within the framework of a class struggle hence it predated the volkish conceptions that were at the centre of Malan's own breakaway during the depression.

Thus it was during the period of the depression that thousands of Afrikaners became victims of a structural dislocation that was to result in more radical solutions to a peculiar dilemma in the whole history of the development of capitalism and colonialism. As whites they belonged to the dominant group while in narrow economic class terms, namely, relation to the means of production in the era of capitalist industrialization they found themselves structurally in the same position as the colonized Africans. The logic of a class society meant loss of colonizer status which is incompatible with chosenness. A pure race ideology would have meant an alliance with big business which was impossible from a position of weakness. Political power was the way out of Afrikaner Proletarianization by what they came to deride as British-Jewish capital and the prospect of being swamped by what they came to regard as the tide of colour.

The notion of the purity of blood was added to notions of 'volk' exclusiveness which themselves pre-dated Capitalist industrialization. Because of the two-front struggle Afrikaner nationalism came to evolve a specific type

of ideology as a principle for the perpetuation of white supremacy. The racism which is a concomitant of all colonial encounters which is simply the expression of an oppressor consciousness was not enough. Thus an amalgam of anti-capitalism, anti-semitism, anti-blacks came to be the rallying point of Afrikanerdom. At the centre of this hodge-podge was the notion of the volk.

Hans Buchheim<sup>37</sup> has stated that

Fascism could take the direction of socialism (the socialism of the trenches!) or the corporate state, Christianity or anti-Christianity, folkism or etatism, Roman Catholicism, or Prussian Lutheranism - at heart it remained romantic and inimical to liberty.

He adds that the roots of folkism lie in the romantic quasi-egalitarian populism of the early 19th century.

At the core of the folkish conception is the conviction that man's characteristic endowments derive from the ethnic group into which he is born, and that the groups, tribes and races can be hierarchically ordered according to their intrinsic worth and cultural achievements

Ernest Krieck<sup>38</sup> described this weltanschauung in the following terms:

Blood rises up against formal understanding, race against the rational pursuit of ends, honour against profit, bonds against the caprice that is called freedom, organic totality against individualistic dissolution, valour against bourgeois society, politics against the primacy of the economy, state against society, folk against the individual and the mass.

In the South African context these notions were applied not to the entire society but to the ethnic group. Thus they did not become the basis of national mobilization

37

Buchheim, H. Totalitarian Rule, pp. 26-27

38

Krieck, E. quoted in Marcuse, H. Negations, p. 3

for fighting international wars but as a weapon internally in a distorted form of class struggle. Herbert Marcuse<sup>39</sup> described this world view!.

In every new formulations, heroic-folkish realism emphasizes the natural properties of the totality represented by the folk. The folk is subject to blood', it arises from the 'soil', it furnishes the homeland with indestructible force and permanence, it is united by characteristics of 'race' the preservation of whose purity is the condition of the folk's 'health'. In the train of this naturism follows a glorification of the peasantry as the only estate still 'bound to nature'... The mythical glorification of the renewal of agriculture has its counterpart in the fight against the metropolis and its 'unnatural' spirit.

We can see from this angle that far from it being the case that the Afrikaner glorification of the peasant republics represents a reactionary revivalism that is both anachronistic and outmoded, that it is at the core of the volkish weltanschauung. Neither is this world view necessarily tied to the kind of biologism which Adam has seen as being replaced by cultural pluralism as a mode of legitimation as the following quote from Marcuse shows:

Nonetheless, the new doctrine of history and society resists speaking of race, folkhood, blood, and soil in terms of naturalistic biologism. It stresses that it conceives of these natural-organic data as simultaneously and essentially historical-spiritual facts out of which grows a historical 'community of destiny'. A secularized theological image of history is expressed in the idea that "every folk receives its historical mandate as a 'mission' that is the first and last, the unrestricted obligation of existence.

From this position the unsolved irrational puzzles of the South African version of racist domination

become quite understandable. The alienation of the English section of the white population in the early sixties which sociologists have described as having been unnecessary and the continuing irrational exclusion of the Cape Coloured people when it would be more tactful to incorporate them. Also the concept of Bantustans though outwardly an opportunistic way out of a dilemma resulting from the fact that South Africa's fascist revolution, if it can be so-called, historically triumphed at the very time when its European counterparts were being buried and also at the very time when decolonization was to be the order of the day at least formally, is also quite compatible with this volkish world view. Ideally if South Africa could be divided into ethnic 'volksdoms' all hierarchically obedient and fulfilling their 'missions' in a classless capitalism the Afrikaner dream would be fulfilled. Yet the very hypothetical existence of this utopia represents its own negation since its essence is born and thrives by inter-group combat of a distorted class nature.

This brings us to the question of the effects of the seizure of state power by the Afrikaners who, as we observed, were by and large outside the bourgeoisie, on the economic development of the country. We noted the anti-capitalism of the Afrikaner version of race-nationalism before its triumph. We also noted its antagonism to the logic of a class society. We may also add its paranoic fear of communism. Eric Fromm<sup>40</sup> described the Nazi economic record in the following

---

40

Fromm, E. quoted in Allardyce G. op. cit. pp. 46-47

terms:

Nazism never had any genuine political or economic principles. It is essential to understand that the very principle of Nazism is its radical opportunism. What mattered was that hundreds of thousands of petty bourgeois, who in the normal course of development had little chance to gain money or power, as members of the Nazi bureaucracy now got a large slice of the wealth and prestige they forced the upper class to share with them. Others who were not members of the Nazi machine were given the jobs taken away from Jews and political enemies; and as for the rest, although they did not get more bread, they got 'circuses'.

The record in South Africa is fairly clear.

After twenty years of Afrikaner rule accompanied by great economic expansion the problem of poor whiteness has been almost completely solved. White workers have become aristocrats of labour not only in their economic position but in the amount of power they wield. Though the state owns and controls a considerable chunk of the economy and though it presides over matters of economic policy (especially insofar as they affect inter-race relations capitalism as a mode of production and form of life is taken for granted and defended almost fanatically. The other side of the irrational policy of separate development is the strengthening of the idea of dependence on cheap contract black labour. The vast machinery of bureaucratic racial regimentation and repression has provided thousands of jobs for the white rabble. The capitalist economy is short of skilled labour, appeals for immigrants become more desperate. Blacks are accepted into semi-skilled and skilled levels at their own black rates of pay. Foreign capital reaps its in inflated rewards. The whole business of a racially structured mode of capitalist parasitism is legitimated by the very fact of its existence and profitability to those who matter.

Herbert Marcuse has observed that the authoritarian state diverts its struggle against liberalism into a struggle of 'weltanschauungen' and bypasses the social structure basic to liberalism because it is itself largely in accord with this basic social structure.

To be sure, we often encounter in heroic-folkish realism vehement invective against the monstrosity of capitalism, against its bourgeois and his greed for profit and so on. But since the foundations of the economic order, the sole source of the possibility of this bourgeois, remain intact, such invectives are always directed against only a specific type of bourgeois and against a specific form of capitalist. They never attack the economic functions of the bourgeois in the capitalist production process.<sup>41</sup>

In fact what the Afrikaners have done is to strengthen South Africa's version of colonial capitalism and use the mechanism of political power for the purpose of self-embourgeoisement as a group. This has not meant the transcendence of the class society which never developed in any pure form anyway, but has strengthened race as a basis of class position and consciousness. Ironically this process has brought in its train real class differences within the Afrikaner group.

---

41

Marcuse, H. op. cit. p. 11.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ADAM, H. Modernizing Racial Domination, South Africa's Political Dynamics, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1971.
- ADAM, H. ed. South Africa: Sociological Perspectives, London: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- AGAR-HAMILTON, J.A.I. The Native Policy of the Voortrekkers, An Essay in the History of the Interior of South Africa, 1836-1858, Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1928.
- ALLARDYCE, G. ed. The Place of Fascism in European History, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971.
- AYLIFF, J. and WHITESIDE, J. History of the Abambo generally known as Fingos, Butterworth, 1912, Cape Town: Gothic Printing Co., 1962.
- BALANDIER, G. The Sociology of Black Africa, translated by Douglas Garman, London: Andre Deutsch, 1970.
- BARROW, J. An Account of Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa, 2 vols., London, 1801.
- BERGEL, E. Social Stratification. New York: McGraw - Hill, 1962.
- BLJMER, H. "Industrialization and Race Relations." In Hunter, G. ed. Industrialization and Race Relations, London: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- BRAITHWAITE, L. "Social Stratification and Cultural Pluralism" - Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. 83, 1960.
- BROOKES, E.H. The History of Native Policy in South Africa from 1830 to the present day, 2nd rev. ed. Pretoria, 1927.
- BRYCE, J. Impressions of South Africa, London: MacMillan, 1897.
- BUCHHEIM, H. Totalitarian Rule: Its nature and characteristics, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1968.
- BUCKLEY, W. "Social Stratification and Social Differentiation," American Sociological Review, Vol. 23, August, 1958.

- BURTON, The Cape Colony for the Settler, London: (1910).
- CHESSON, F.W. The Dutch Republics of South Africa (Three letters to R.N. Fowler and Buxton 1868), London, 1939.
- CORY, G.E. The Rise of South Africa, Vol. 2 London: Longmans', 1913.
- COX, O.C. Caste, Class and Race: a study in Social dynamics, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1959.
- DE KIEWIET, C.W. A History of South Africa. Social and Economic, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941.
- DE KOCK, M.H. Selected Subjects in the Economic History of South Africa, Cape Town, 1924.
- DE KOCK, M.H. The Economic Development of South Africa. Westminster, 1935.
- DE KOCK, V. Those in Bondage: an account of the life of the slave at the Cape in the days of the Dutch East India Company, London, Allen and Unwin, 1950.
- DJILAS, M. The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System, London: Allen and Unwin, 1966. (1957)
- DU PLESSIS, J. A History of Christian Missions in South Africa. London, 1911.
- DOBB, M. Studies in the Development of Capitalism. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963.
- DOUGLAS, P. Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, Vol I-II.
- DUNLOP, J.O. and DENMAN, R. English Apprenticeship and Child Labour: A History, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912.
- DURKHEIM, E. The Division of Labour in Society. translated by George Simpson, New York: The Free Press, 1933.
- ELKIN, A.P. "The Reaction of Primitive Races to the White man's Culture," Hibbert Journal (35), 1937.
- ELKINS, S. Slavery: a Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life, New York: Grosset and Dunlap (2nd ed. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968.



- FANON, F. Toward the African Revolution, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1965.
- FOUCHE, L. ed. The Diary of Adam Tas (1705-1706), London, 1914.
- FRANK, A.G. Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil, New York, London: Monthly Review Press, 1967.
- FRANK, A.G. Latin America Underdevelopment or Revolution, London: Monthly Review Press, 1970.
- FRANKEL, S.H. Capital Investment in Africa: its course and effects, London, 1938.
- FRAZIER, F. Race and Culture Contacts in the Modern World, Boston: Beacon Press, 1965.
- FREIRE, P. Pedagogy of the Oppressed, translated by M.B. Ramos, New York: Herder and Herder, 1970.
- FREYRE, G. The Masters and the Slaves, a Study in the development of Brazilian civilization, translated by Samuel Putnam, New York: Knopf, 1956.
- FURNIVALL, J.S. Colonial Policy and Practice, London: Cambridge University Press, 1948.
- FURNIVALL, J.S. Netherlands India: A Study in Plural Economy, London: Cambridge University Press, 1967.
- GEIGER, T. "Class Society in the melting Pot." In Heller, C.S. ed. Structured Social Inequality, A Reader in Comparative Social Stratification, New York: Macmillan, London: Collier - Macmillan, 1969.
- GENOVESE, E. The World the Slaveholders Made: two Essays in Interpretation, New York: Pantheon, 1969.
- GUMFLOWICZ, L. Outlines of Sociology, translated by Moore, New York: Paine - Whitman, 1965, (1899).
- HACKER, L.M. "Sections or Classes?" Nation, 137 (July 26, 1933).
- HARRIS, M. Patterns of Race in the Americas, New York: Walker and Co., 1964.

- HELLER, C.S. ed. Structured Social Inequality. A Reader in Comparative Social Stratification, New York: Macmillan, London: Collier - Macmillan, 1969.
- HEPPLE, A. South Africa : a political and economic history, New York: Praeger; London: Pall Mall, 1966.
- HOETINK, H. The Two Variants of Caribbean Race Relations. A contribution to the sociology of segmented societies, London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- HORRELL, M. South Africa: basic facts and figures, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1973.
- HUNTER, G. ed. Industrialization and Race Relations, London: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- IDENBURG, P.J. The Cape of Good Hope at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century, Leiden, 1963.
- JAMES, S. South of the Congo, London, 1948.
- KEPPEL-JONES, A. South Africa, A Short Story, London: Hutchinson University Library, 1949, 4th ed. 1968.
- KUPER, L. An African Bourgeoisie: Race, Class and Politics in South Africa, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965.
- KUPER, L. and SMITH, M.G. ed. Pluralism in Africa, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.
- KUPER, L. "Stratification in Plural Societies: Focus on White Settler Societies in Africa." In Plotnicov, L. and Tuden, A. ed. Essays in Social Stratification, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970.
- LENSKI, G. Power and Privilege, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.
- LEYDS, W.J. The First Annexation of the Transvaal, London, 1906.
- LICHTENSTEIN, H. Travels in Southern Africa in the years 1803-1806, translated by Anne Plumptree, Cape Town, 1928-30.
- LIPSET, S.M. Political Man: the Social bases of politics, London: Heinemann, 1960, (U.S.A. 1959).

- LIPSET, S. and  
BENDIX, R. ed. Class, Status and Power, New York: Free Press, 1953; 2nd edn. London: Routledge, 1967.
- LIVINGSTONE, D. Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa, London, 1857.
- LUKACS, G. History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics, London: Merlin Press, 1971.
- MAC CRONE, I.D. Race Attitudes in South Africa (Historical Experimental and Psychological Studies) Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1965.
- MACMILLAN, W.M. Bantu, Boer, and Briton: the making of the South African Native problem, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.
- MACMILLAN, W.M. The Cape Colour Question: a historical survey, London: Faber, 1927.
- MCBRIDGE, G.M. Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences Vol. 13.
- MALINOWSKI, B. The Dynamics of Culture Change: an inquiry into race relations in Africa, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945.
- MANNHEIM, K. Ideology and Utopia, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1936.
- MARAIS, J.S. The Cape Coloured People 1652-1937, Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1957, 1968.
- MARAIS, J.S. The Fall of Kruger's Republic, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.
- MARCUSE, H. Negations, Essays in Critical Theory, translated by J.J. Shapiro, London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1968.
- MARQUARD, L. The Story of South Africa, London: Faber and Faber, 1960, (1955).
- MARX, K. and  
ENGELS, F. The Holy Family, translated by R. Dixon, Moscow, 1956.
- MAUNIER, R. The Sociology of Colonies: An introduction to the Study of race contact ed. and translated by E.O. Limmer 2 Vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949, (U.S.A. 1965).

- MAYER, P. Townsmen or Tribesmen: conservation and the process of urbanization in a South African city, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- MENTZEL, F. A Geographical and Topographical Description of the Cape of Good Hope, translated by G.V. Marais and J. Hoge, revised and edited by H.J. Mandelbrote, 3 Vols, Cape Town, 1921, 1924, 1944.
- MERIVALE, H. Lectures on Colonization and Colonies, London: Frank Cass, 1969.
- MOORE BARRINGTON, Jnr. Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World, London: Allen Lane, 1967, (1966).
- MORNER, M. Race Mixture in the History of Latin America, Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1967.
- NEUMARK, S.P. Economic Influences on the South African Frontier, 1652-1836, Stanford, 1957.
- NIEBOER, H. Slavery as an Industrial System, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1910.
- NUSSBAUM, F. History of the Economic Institutions of Modern Europe. Clifton: Kelley, 1970.
- OLMSTED, F. A Journey in the Back Country, New York, 1860.
- OPPENHEIMER, F. The State, translated by G.M. Gitterman, Indianapolis, Ind., 1914.
- PARSONS, T. Essays in Sociological Theory, Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1954.
- PIERSON, G.W. "The Frontier and American Institutions: A Criticism of the Turner Theory," New England Quarterly 15th June, 1942.
- PITT-RIVERS, G.H. The Clash of Cultures and the Contact of Races, Westport: Negro University Press, 1927 ed.
- PLOTNICOV, L. and TUDEN, A. ed. Essays in Social Stratification, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970.
- RADCLIFFE-BROWN, A. Structure and Function in Primitive Society, London: Cohen and West, 1952.

- RANDALL, P. ed. Towards Social Change, Johannesburg: Spro-Cas, 1972.
- REX, J. Race, Colonialism and the City, London, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.
- ROBERTSON, H.M. "150 Years of Economic contact between Black and White" Journal of South African Economy, 2(4) Dec. 1934.
- ROBINSON, G.T. Rural Russia under the Old Regime: A History of the Landlord Peasant World and a Prologue to the Peasant Revolution of 1917, New York, 1932.
- ROSENTHAL, E. Gold! Gold! Gold! New York: Macmillan, 1970.
- SCHAPER, I. ed. The Bantu Speaking Tribes of South Africa, Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1953.
- SCHNEIDER, E. Industrial Sociology, New York: Mc Graw-Hill, 1957.
- SCHUMANN, C.G.W. Structural Change and Business Cycles in South Africa (1806-1936), London, 1938.
- SIMONS, H.J. and R.E. Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950, London: Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1969.
- SMITH, M.G. The Plural Society in the British West Indies, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965.
- SPARRMAN, A. A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope, 1772-6, 2 Vols. Dublin, 1785.
- SPIELHAUS, M.W. The First South Africans and the Laws which Governed Them, Cape Town: Juta, 1949.
- STAMPP, K.M. The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964.
- STEENKAMP, L.W. ed. The diary of Anna Steenkamp and fragments on the Greak Trek, Pietermaritzburg, 1939.
- TANNENBAUM, F. Slave and Citizen: the Negro in the Americas, New York: Vintage Books, 1946.
- TAYLOR, G.R. The Turner Thesis concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History (Problems of American Civilization) Rev. ed. Boston: Heath and Company, 1967. (1st ed. 1949).

- THEAL, G.M. History of South Africa from 1795-1872, (5 Vols.), London: Allen and Unwin, 1908-10.
- THEAL, G.M. ed. Records of the Cape Colony, 36 Vols London, 1897-1905.
- THURNBERG, C.P. Travels in Europe, Africa and Asia... between....1770 and 1779, 4 Vols. London, 1795.
- TIRYAKIAN, E. "Apartheid and Religion," Theology Today, Vol. 14, 1957.
- TOURAINÉ, A. Post-Industrial Society, New York: Random House, 1971.
- TROUP, F. South Africa. An Historical Introduction, London: Eyre Methuen, 1972.
- TUMIN, M. "Some Principles of Stratification: A critical analysis," American Sociological Review, Vol. 18, August, 1953.
- TURNER, F.T. The Frontier in American History, London: Holt, R. & W., 1962, (U.S.A. 1st ed. 1920).
- VAN DEN BERGHE, P. ed. Africa Social Problems of Change and Conflict. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1965.
- VAN DEN BERGHE, P. Race and Racism: a comparative perspective, New York: Wiley, 1967.
- VAN DEN BERGHE, P. South Africa: A Study in Conflict, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1964.
- VAN DER HORST, S. The Effects of Industrialization on Race Relations in South Africa. In Hunter, G. (Ed.) Industrialization and Race Relations London: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- VAN DER MERWE, P.J. Trek: Studies on the mobility of the pioneer population at the Cape, Cape Town, 1945.
- WAGLEY, C. and HARRIS, M. Minorities in the New World, New York: Columbia University Press, 1964.
- WALKER, E.A. A History of Southern Africa, London: Longmans, 1957, 1965, 3rd rev. edn.

WATERHOFF, E.B.

Three Lectures on the Cape of Good Hope under the Government of the Dutch East India Company, London, 1910.

WEBER, M.

General Economic History, translated by Frank H. Knight, New York: Collier Books, 1961.

WERTHEIM, W.F.

Indonesian Society in Transition: a study of social change, The Hague: Van Hoeve, 1959 (2nd ed.).

WILLIAMS, E.

Capitalism and Slavery, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966.

WILMOT, A.

The Life and Times of Sir Richard Southey, etc., formerly colonial Secretary of the Cape Colony, and lieut. - governor of Griqualand West, London, 1904.

WILSON, M. and  
THOMPSON, L.

ed. The Oxford History of South Africa, Vol. 1 South Africa to 1870, London: Oxford University Press, 1969.

WRIGHT, W.

Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope, Westport: Negro University Press, 1971. (London, 1831).